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Scardino

(10) **Patent No.: US 9,098,832 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent: Aug. 4, 2015**

(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR RECORDING A PHOTO CHAT SESSION**

(75) Inventor: **Patricia Scardino**, Apex, NC (US)

(73) Assignee: **Qurio Holdings, Inc.**, Raleigh, NC (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 2191 days.

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(22) Filed: **Nov. 15, 2005**

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G06F 15/16 (2006.01)
G06Q 10/10 (2012.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***G06Q 10/107*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC G06Q 10/10; G06Q 10/107; H04L 29/06; H04L 29/08072; H04L 29/06027; H04L 12/581; H04L 12/585; H04L 12/58; H04L 12/5855
See application file for complete search history.

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"Create a hyperlink to a custom show or location in the current presentation" (Microsoft Office PowerPoint Help), 2003, Microsoft Corporation.*

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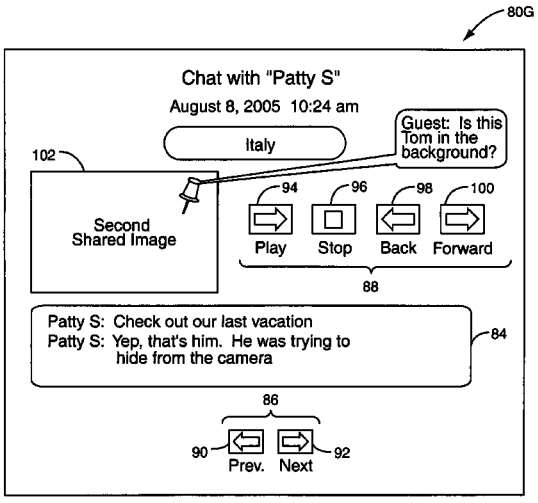
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system and method for recording a photo chat session are provided. In one embodiment, an online photo album is hosted by a peer node in a peer-to-peer (P2P) photosharing system, and a photo chat session is established between an owner at the peer node and a guest viewing the online photo album at a guest node. At the end of the photo chat session, either the owner or the guest requests that the photo chat session be saved. In response, the peer node generates a chat history including a slideshow for each shared image recreating a portion of the photo chat session related to the shared image. In another embodiment, an online photo album is hosted by a central node in a centrally hosted photosharing system, wherein the central node generates the chat history in response to a request from either the owner or the guest.

31 Claims, 24 Drawing Sheets



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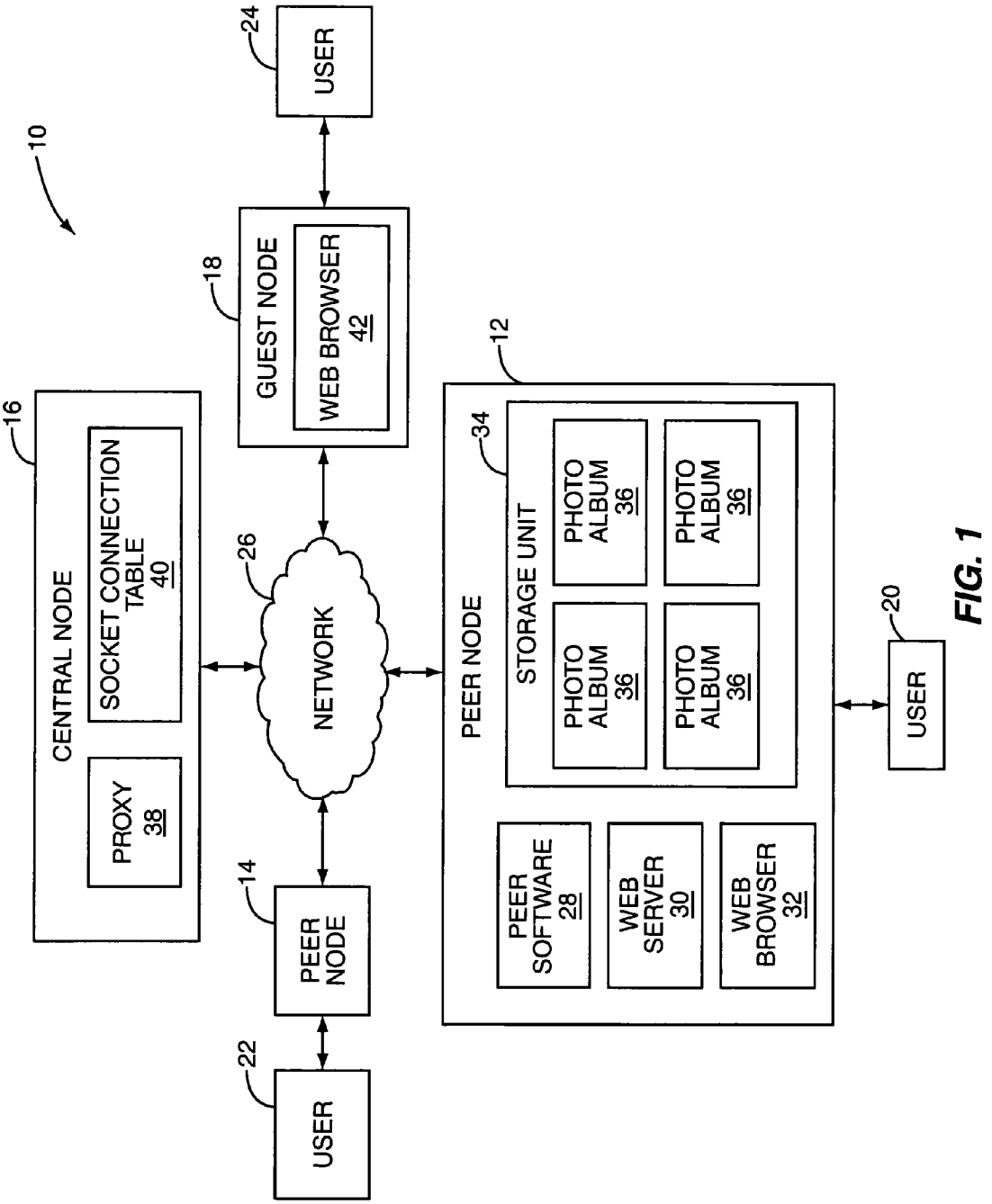
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USER
24
GUEST NODE
18
WEB BROWSER
42
CENTRAL NODE
16
SOCKET CONNECTION TABLE
40
PROXY
38
NETWORK
26
PEER NODE
12
STORAGE UNIT
34
PHOTO ALBUM
36
PHOTO ALBUM
36
PHOTO ALBUM
36
PHOTO ALBUM
36
PEER SOFTWARE
28
WEB SERVER
30
WEB BROWSER
32
USER
20
PEER NODE
14
USER
22

FIG. 1

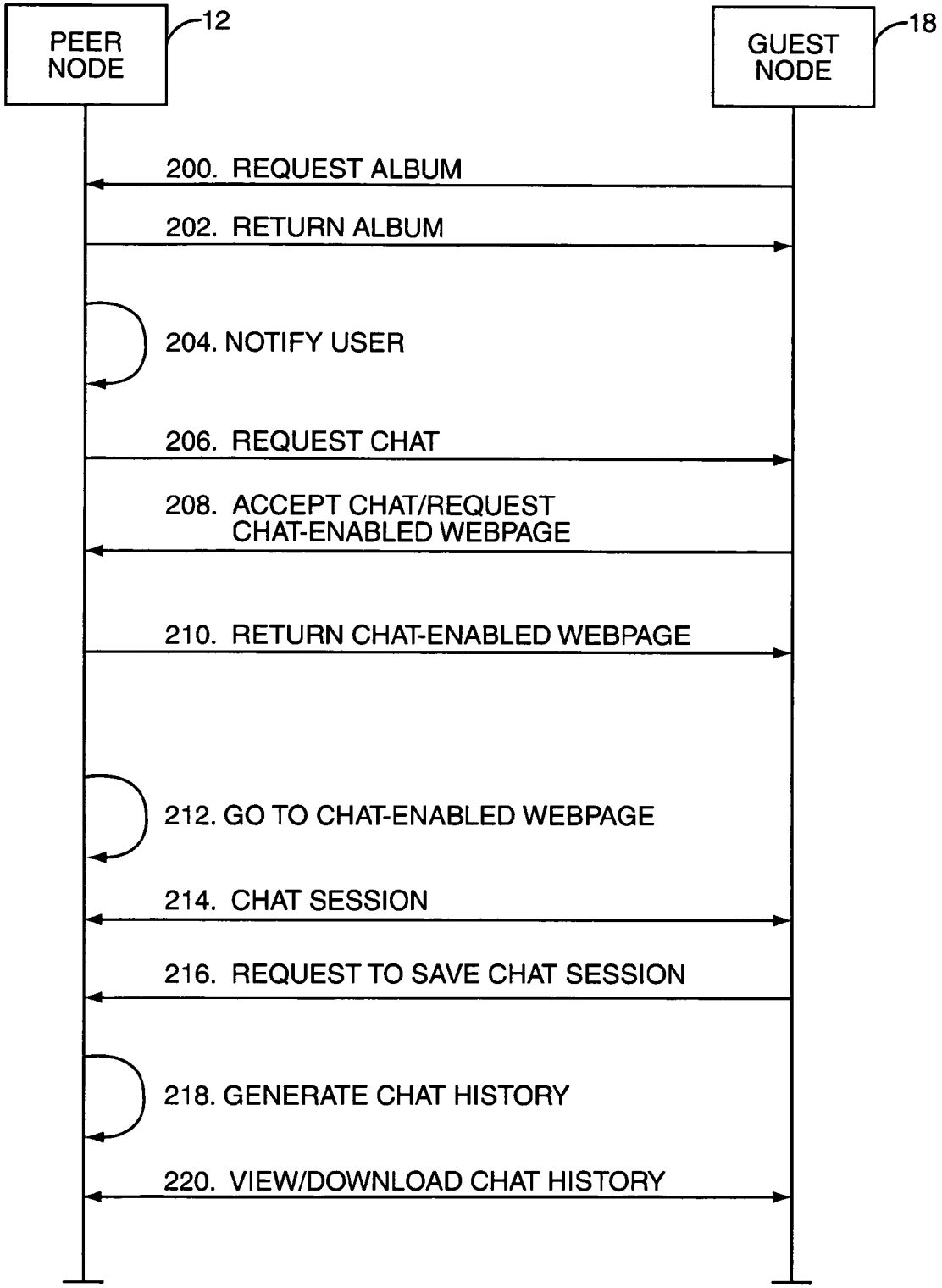
PEER NODE
12
GUEST NODE
18
200. REQUEST ALBUM
202. RETURN ALBUM
204. NOTIFY USER
206. REQUEST CHAT
208. ACCEPT CHAT/REQUEST CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
210. RETURN CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
212. GO TO CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
214. CHAT SESSION
216. REQUEST TO SAVE CHAT SESSION
218. GENERATE CHAT HISTORY
220. VIEW/DOWNLOAD CHAT HISTORY

FIG. 2

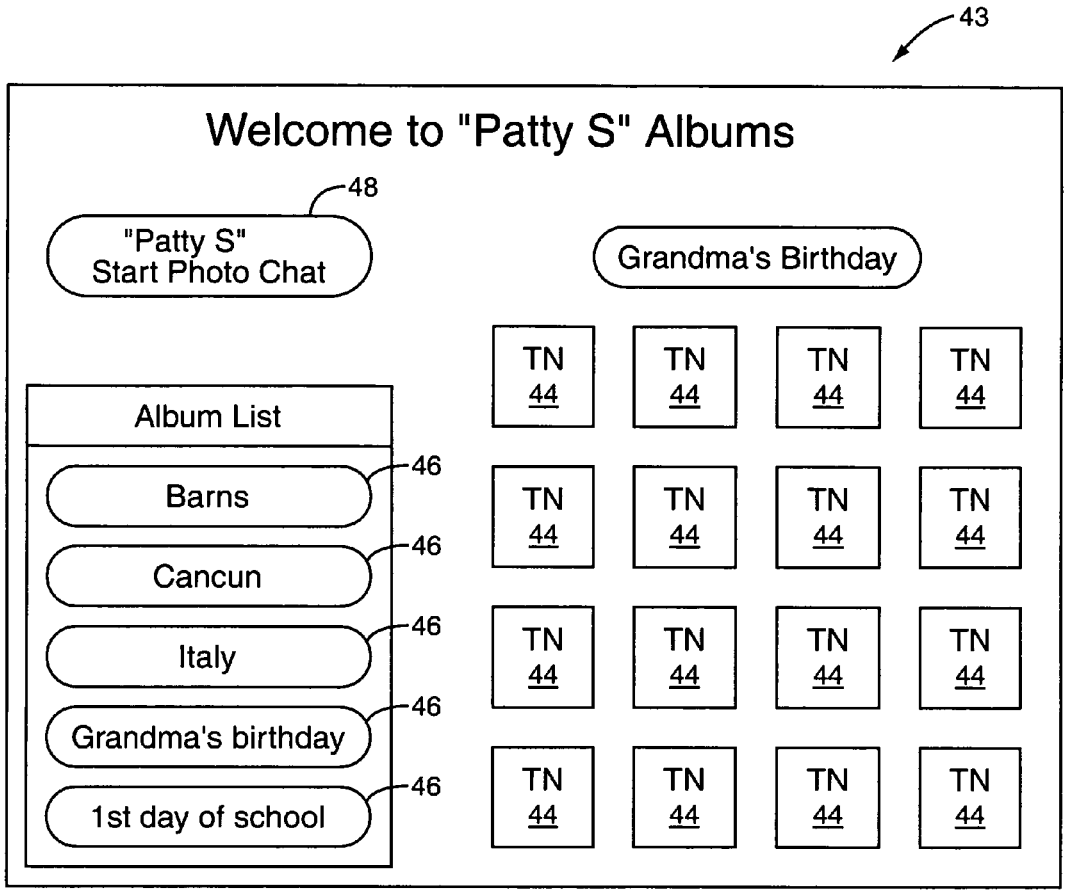
43
Welcome to "Patty S" Albums
48
"Patty S"
Start Photo Chat
Grandma's Birthday
Album List
Barns
Cancun
Italy
Grandma's birthday
1st day of school
46
TN
44

FIG. 3

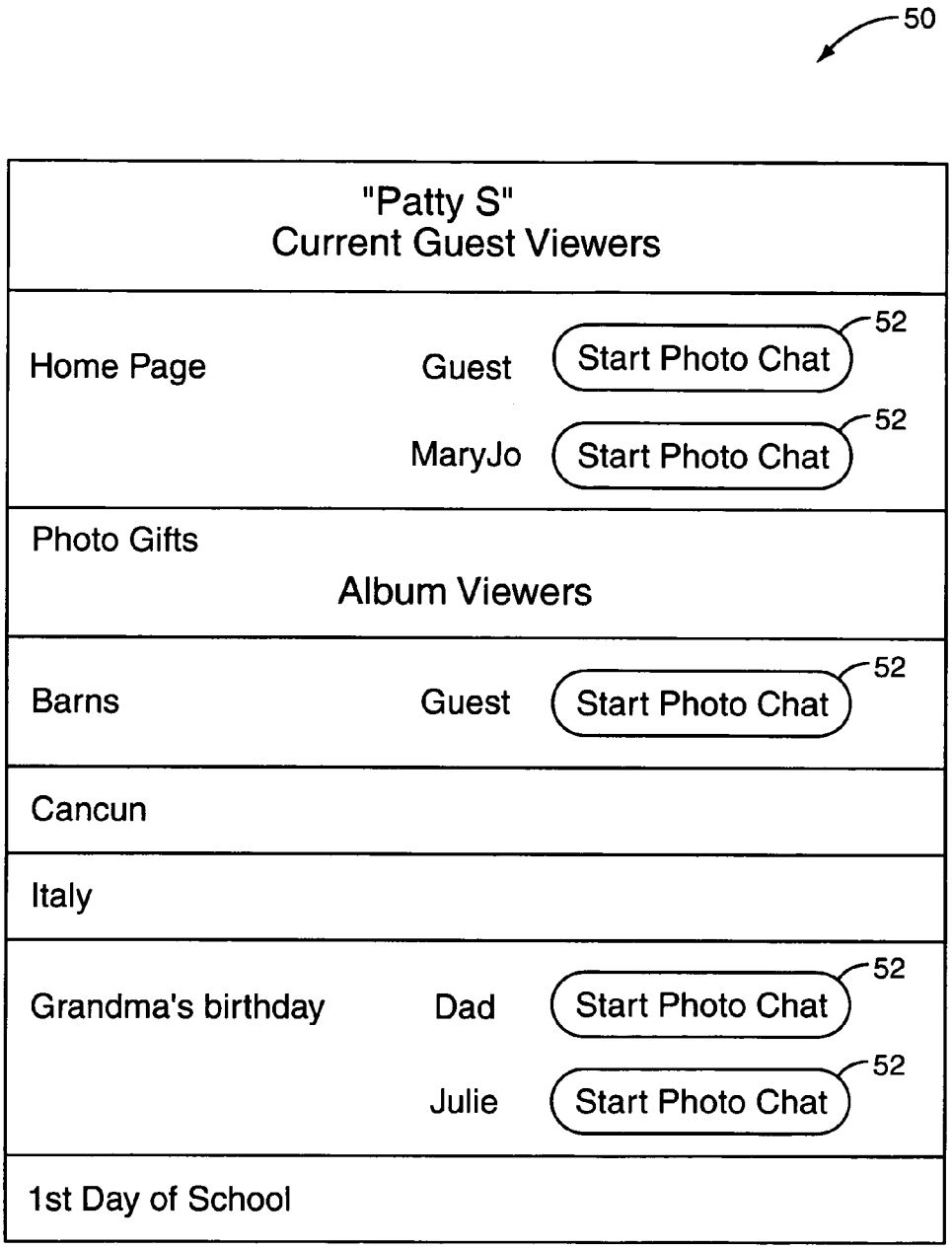
50
"Patty S"
Current Guest Viewers
Home Page
Guest
Start Photo Chat
52
MaryJo
Start Photo Chat
52
Photo Gifts
Album Viewers
Barns
Guest
Start Photo Chat
52
Cancun
Italy
Grandma's birthday
Dad
Start Photo Chat
52
Julie
Start Photo Chat
52
1st Day of School

FIG. 4

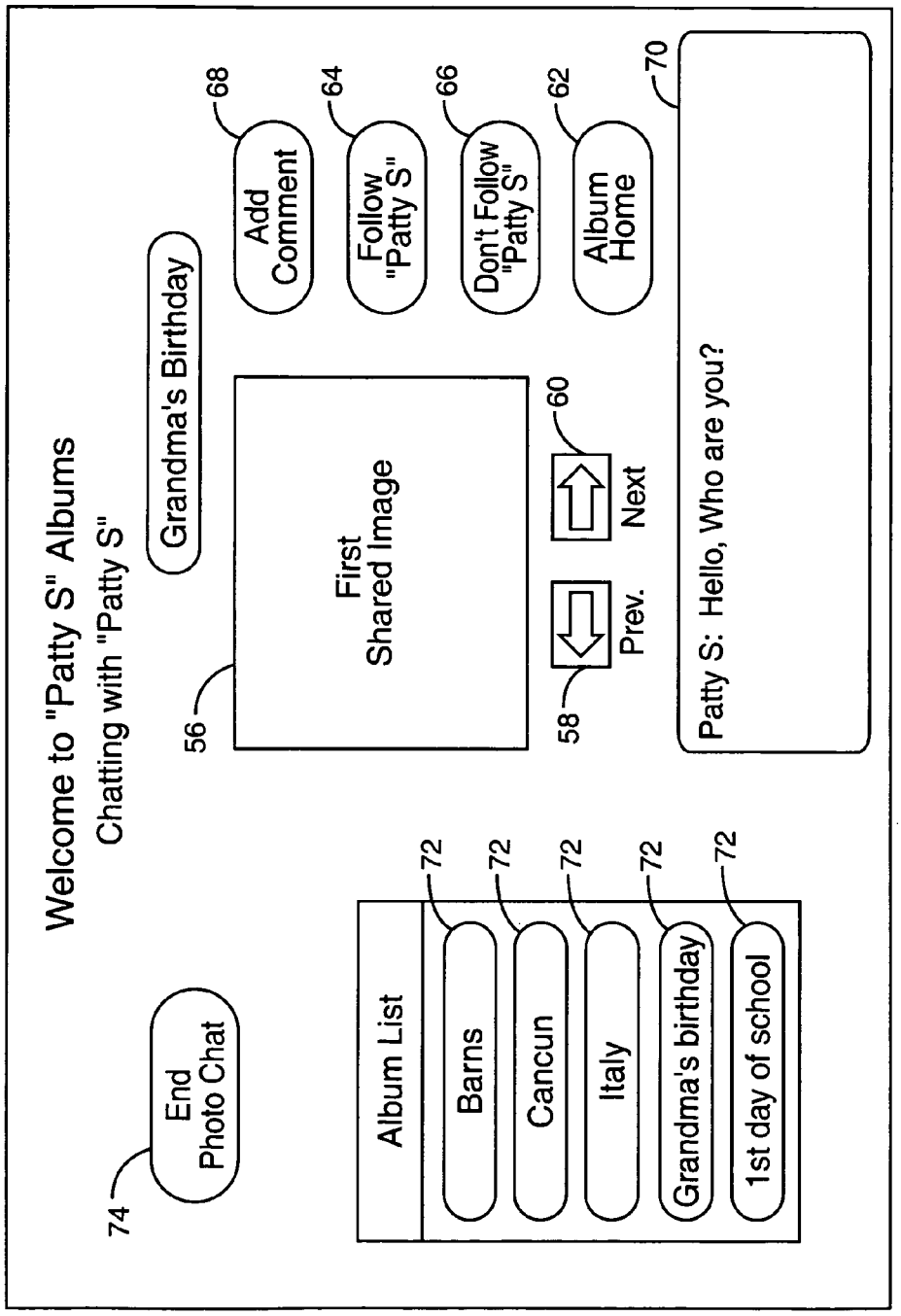
54
Welcome to "Patty S" Albums
Chatting with "Patty S"
Grandma's Birthday
56
First Shared Image
58
Prev.
60
Next
Add Comment
68
Follow "Patty S"
64
Don't Follow "Patty S"
66
Album Home
62
70
Patty S: Hello, Who are you?
Album List
Barns
Cancun
Italy
Grandma's birthday
1st day of school
72
End Photo Chat
74

FIG. 5A

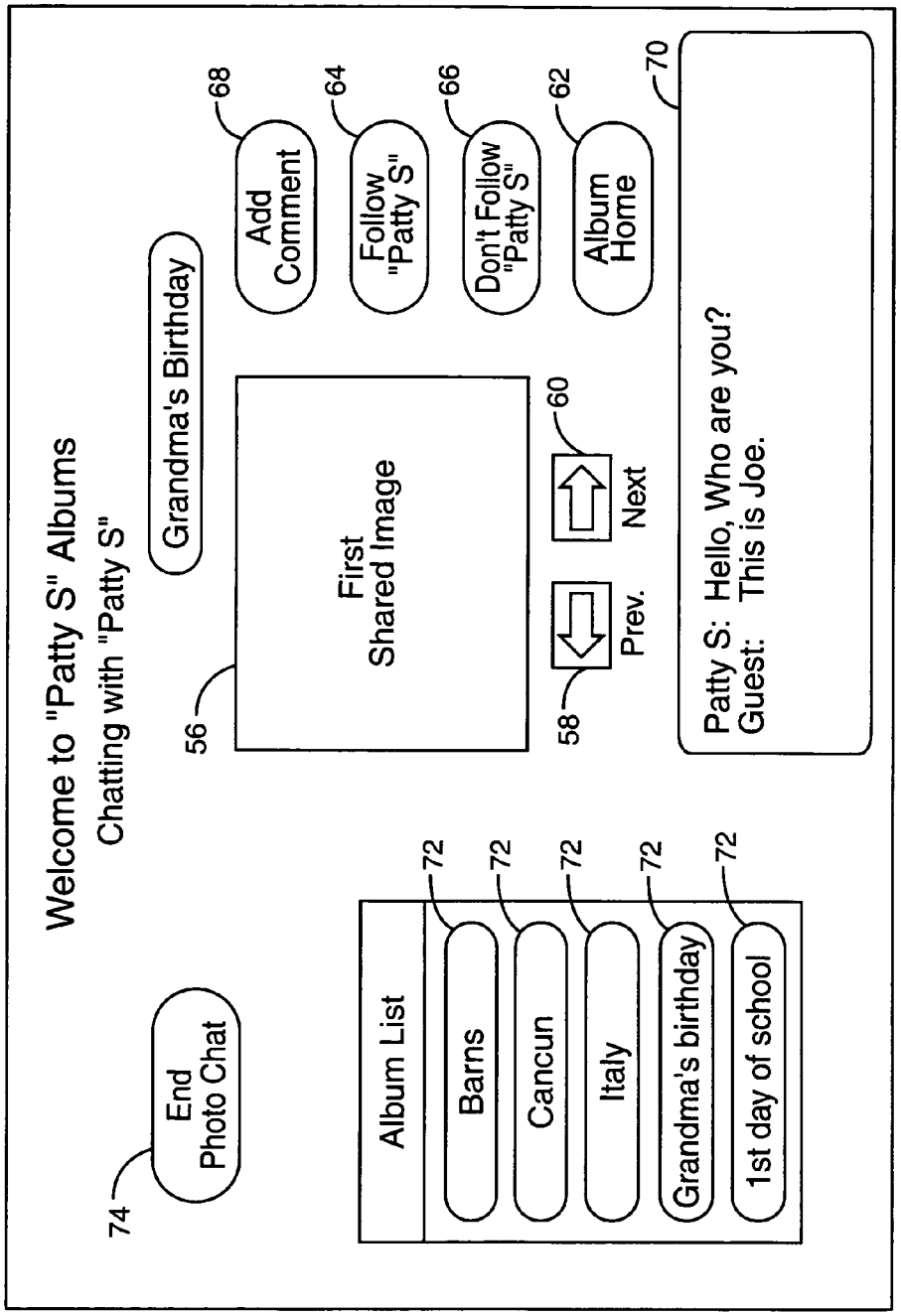
54
Welcome to "Patty S" Albums
Chatting with "Patty S"
Grandma's Birthday
68
Add Comment
64
Follow "Patty S"
66
Don't Follow "Patty S"
62
Album Home
70
56
First Shared Image
60
58
Prev.
Next
Patty S: Hello, Who are you?
Guest: This is Joe.
Album List
72
Barns
72
Cancun
72
Italy
72
Grandma's birthday
72
1st day of school
74
End Photo Chat

FIG. 5B

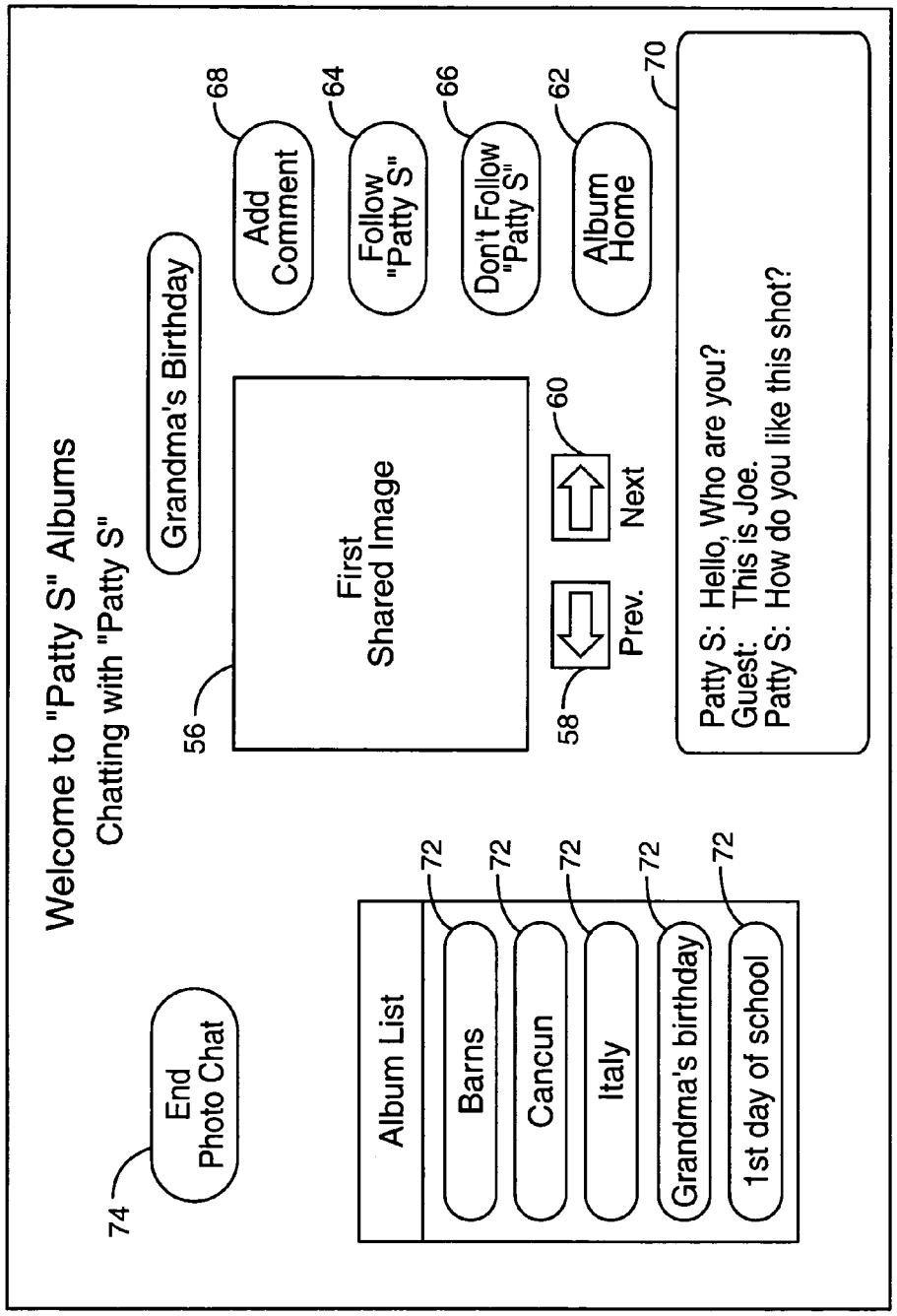
54
Welcome to "Patty S" Albums
Chatting with "Patty S"
Grandma's Birthday
Add Comment
Follow "Patty S"
Don't Follow "Patty S"
Album Home
First Shared Image
Prev.
Next
Patty S: Hello, Who are you?
Guest: This is Joe.
Patty S: How do you like this shot?
Album List
Barns
Cancun
Italy
Grandma's birthday
1st day of school
End Photo Chat
56
58
60
62
64
66
68
70
72
74

FIG. 5C

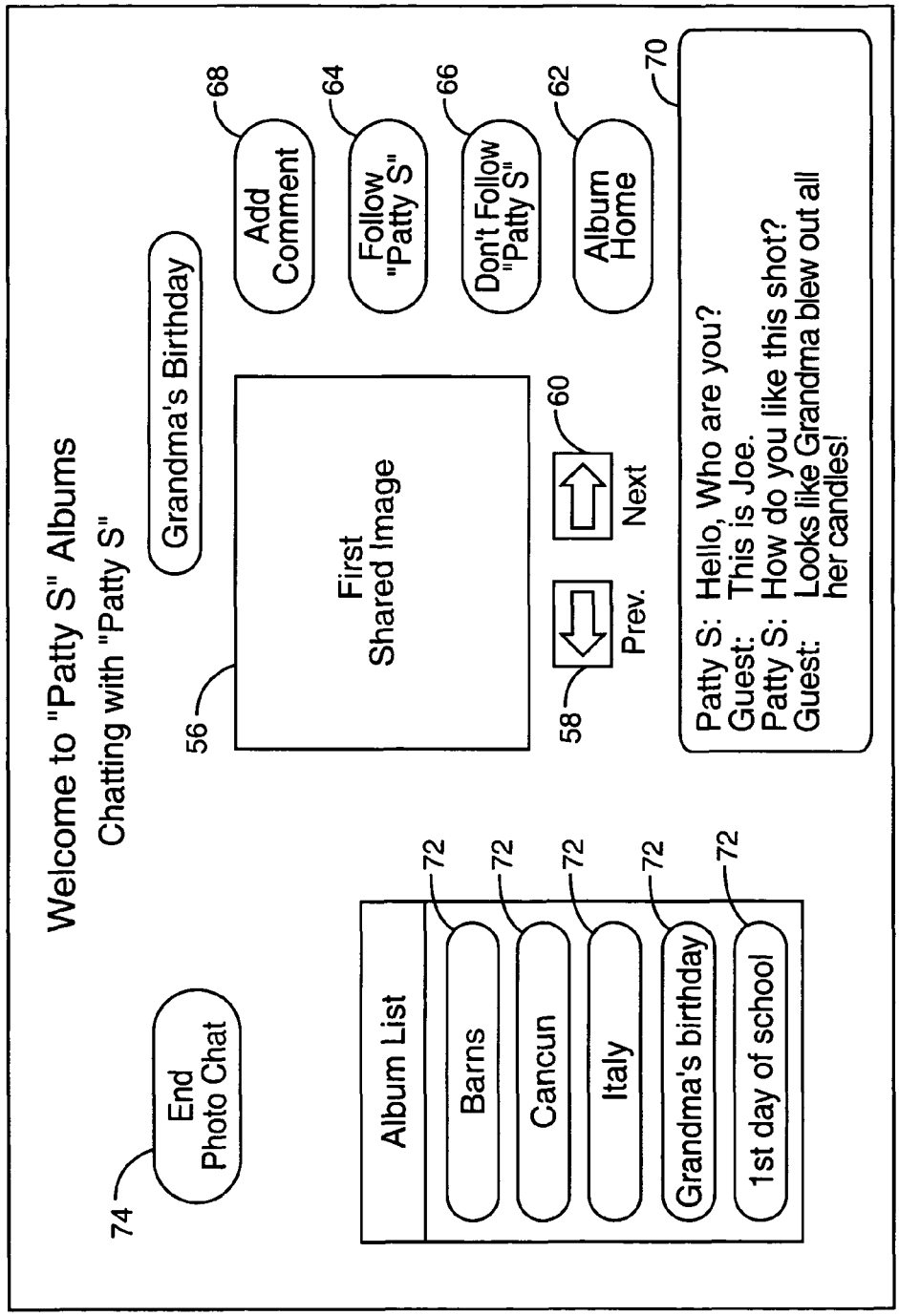
54
Welcome to "Patty S" Albums
Chatting with "Patty S"
Grandma's Birthday
Add Comment
Follow "Patty S"
Don't Follow "Patty S"
Album Home
First Shared Image
Prev.
Next
Patty S: Hello, Who are you?
Guest: This is Joe.
Patty S: How do you like this shot?
Guest: Looks like Grandma blew out all her candles!
Album List
Barns
Cancun
Italy
Grandma's birthday
1st day of school
End Photo Chat
56
58
60
62
64
66
68
70
72
74

FIG. 5D

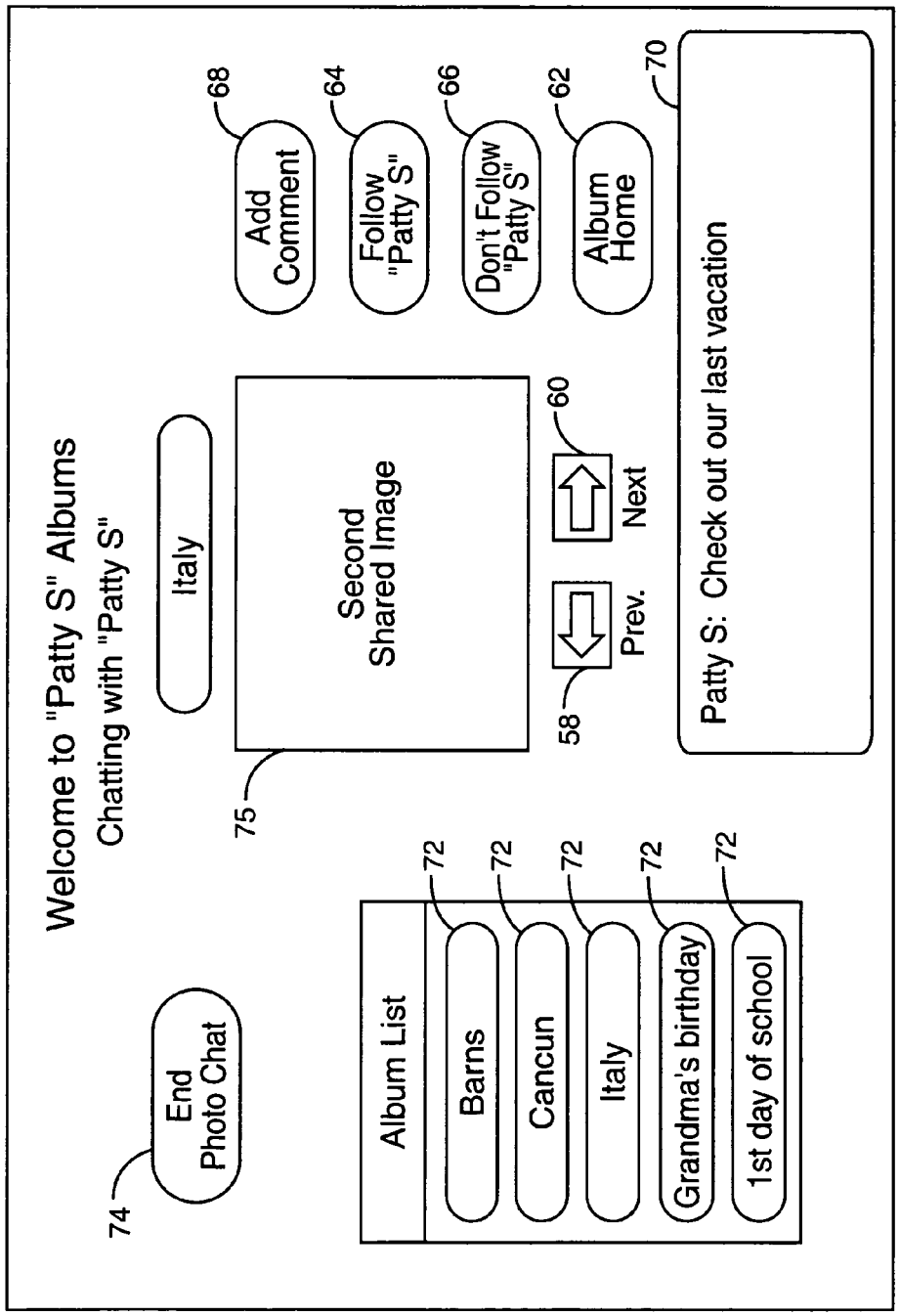
54
Welcome to "Patty S" Albums
Chatting with "Patty S"
Italy
Second Shared Image
75
Prev.
58
Next
60
Add Comment
68
Follow "Patty S"
64
Don't Follow "Patty S"
66
Album Home
62
Patty S: Check out our last vacation
70
End Photo Chat
74
Album List
Barns
Cancun
Italy
Grandma's birthday
1st day of school
72
72
72
72
72

FIG. 5E

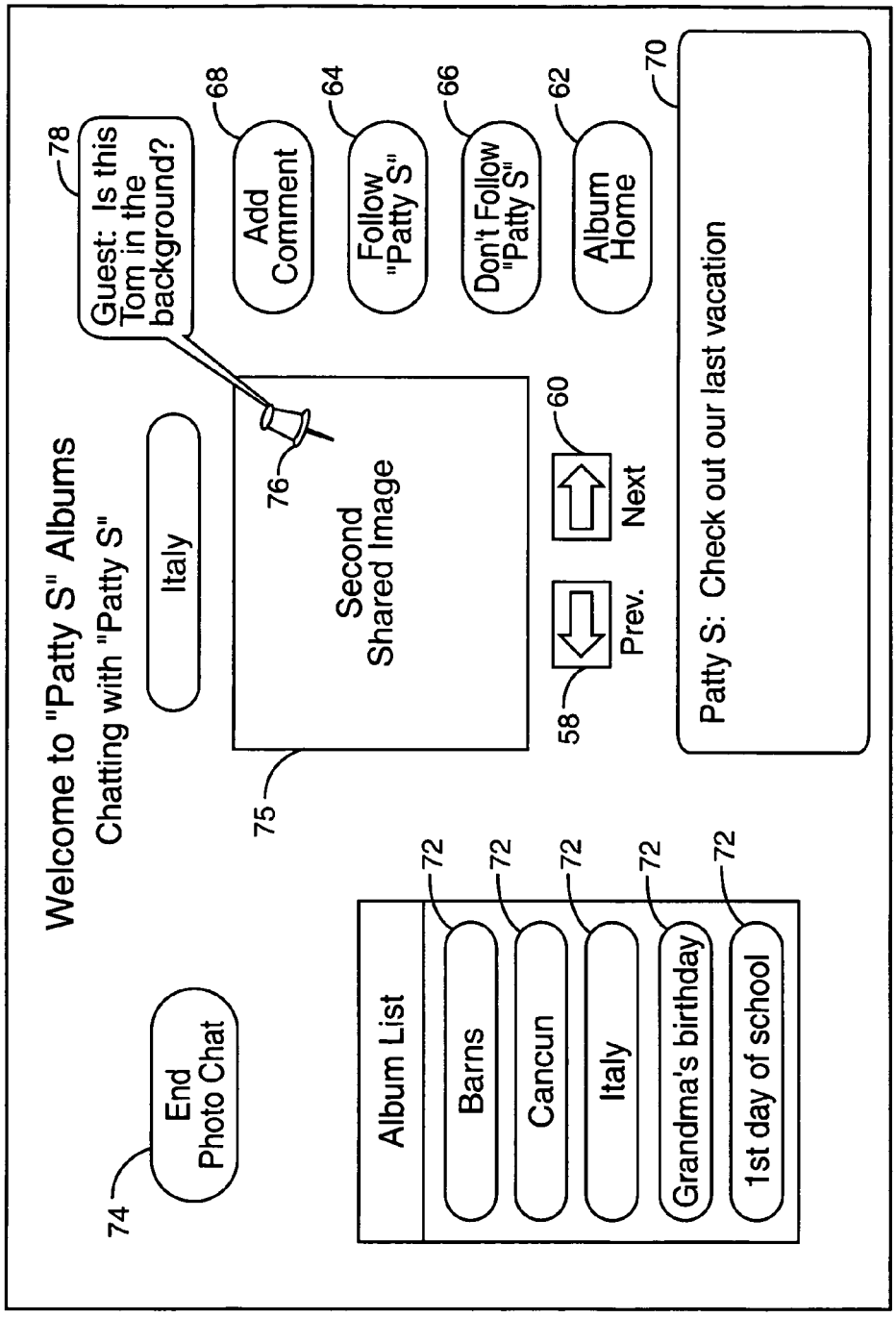
54
Welcome to "Patty S" Albums
Chatting with "Patty S"
Italy
End Photo Chat
74
Album List
Barns
Cancun
Italy
Grandma's birthday
1st day of school
72
75
76
Second Shared Image
Guest: Is this Tom in the background?
78
Add Comment
68
Follow "Patty S"
64
Don't Follow "Patty S"
66
Album Home
62
Patty S: Check out our last vacation
70
Prev.
58
Next
60

FIG. 5F

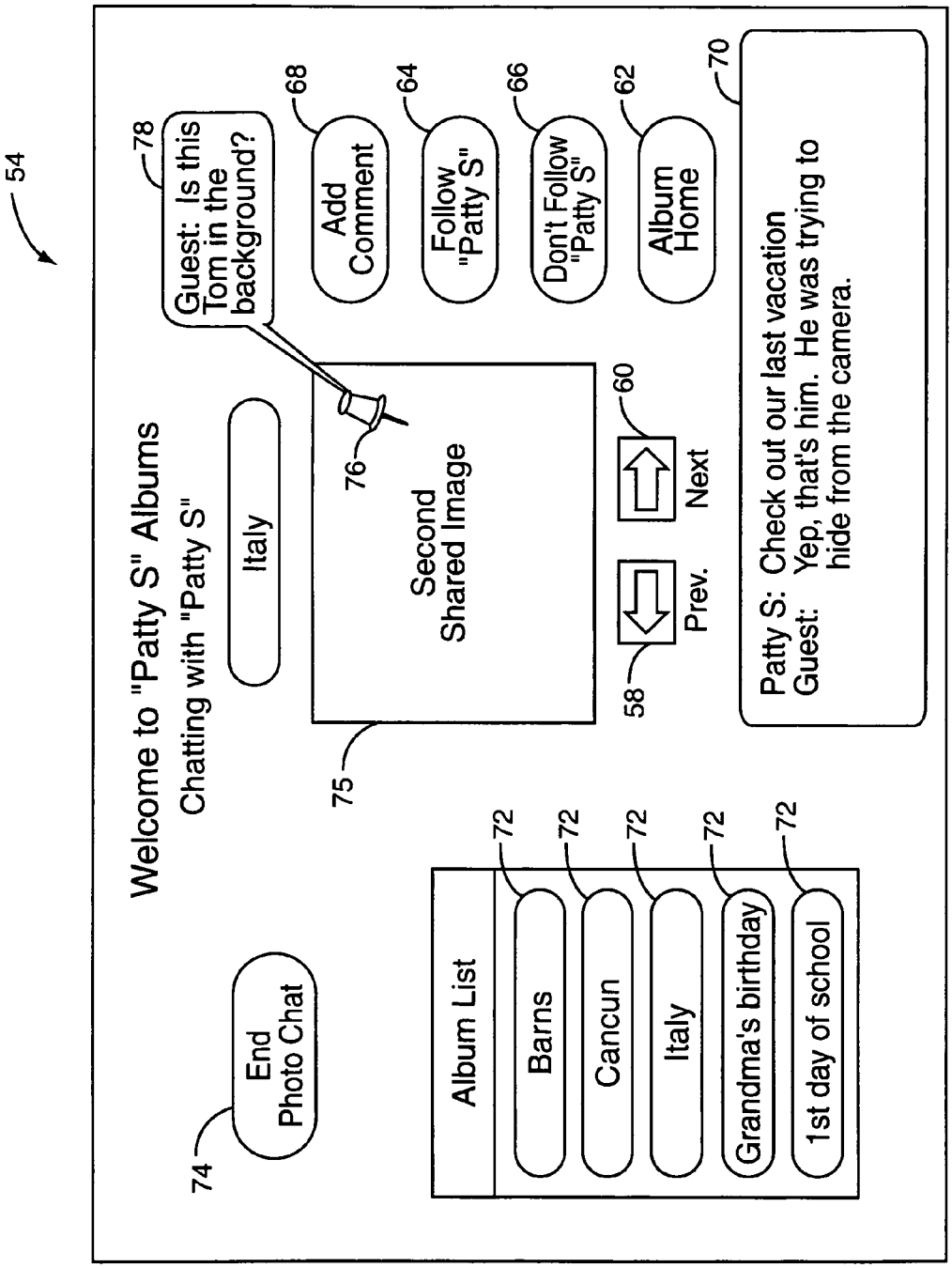
54
Welcome to "Patty S" Albums
Chatting with "Patty S"
Italy
Guest: Is this Tom in the background?
78
Add Comment
68
Follow "Patty S"
64
Don't Follow "Patty S"
66
Album Home
62
70
Second Shared Image
76
75
Prev.
58
Next
60
Patty S: Check out our last vacation
Guest: Yep, that's him. He was trying to hide from the camera.
Album List
Barns
Cancun
Italy
Grandma's birthday
1st day of school
72
End Photo Chat
74

FIG. 5G

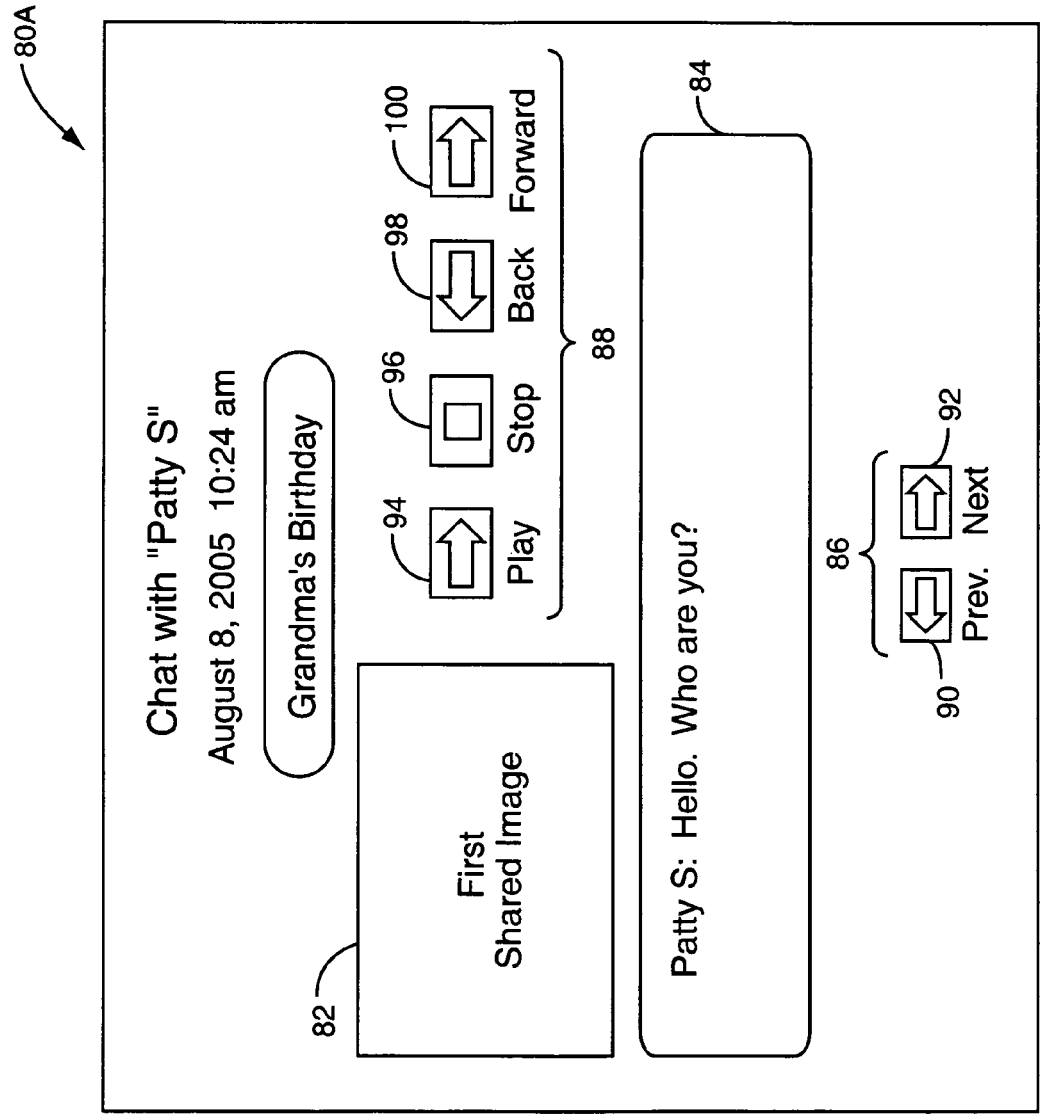
80A
Chat with "Patty S"
August 8, 2005 10:24 am
Grandma's Birthday
First
Shared Image
82
94
Play
96
Stop
98
Back
100
Forward
88
84
Patty S: Hello. Who are you?
86
90
Prev.
92
Next

FIG. 6A

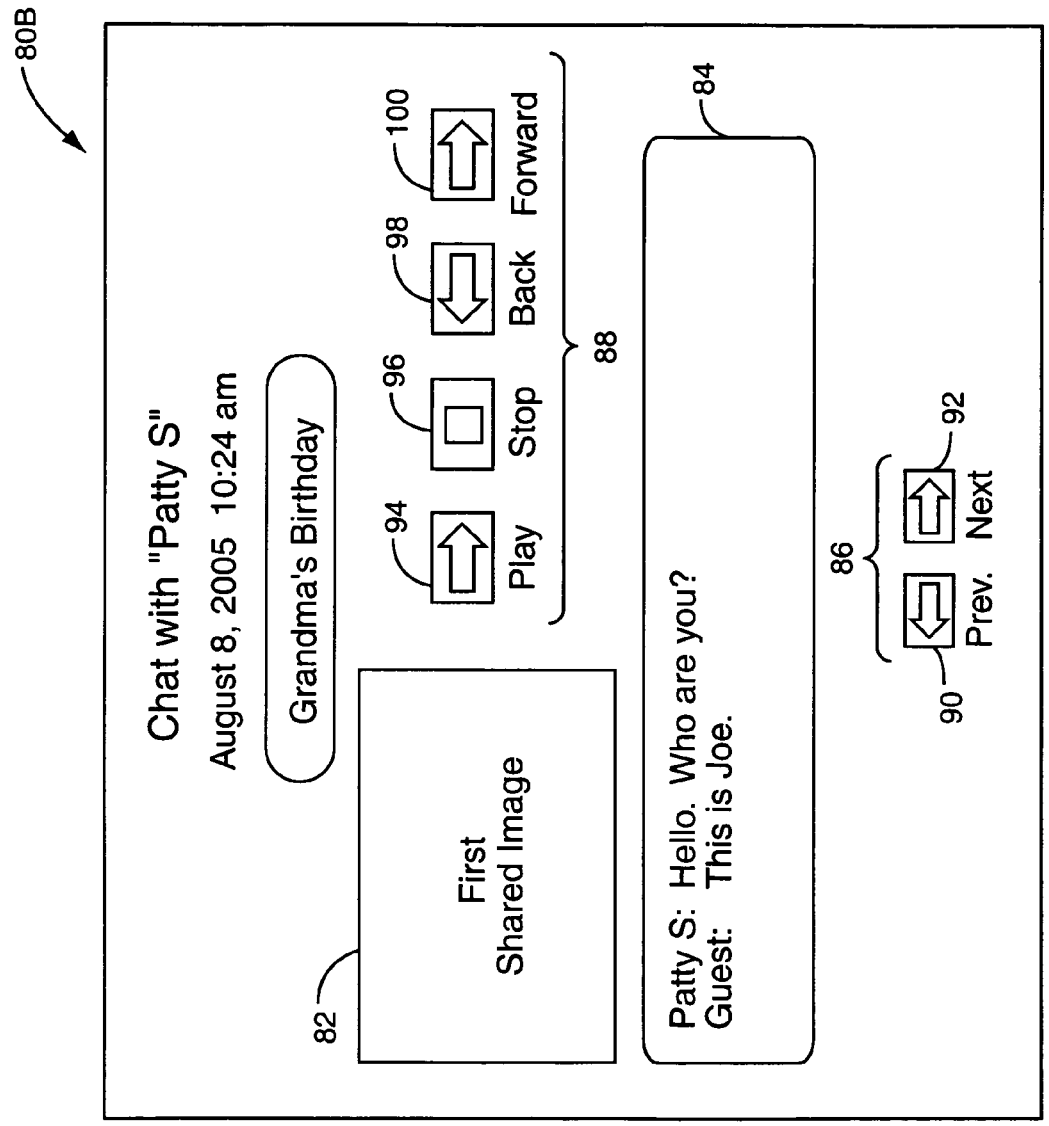
80B
Chat with "Patty S"
August 8, 2005 10:24 am
Grandma's Birthday
First
Shared Image
82
94
Play
96
Stop
98
Back
100
Forward
88
84
Patty S: Hello. Who are you?
Guest: This is Joe.
86
90
Prev.
92
Next

FIG. 6B

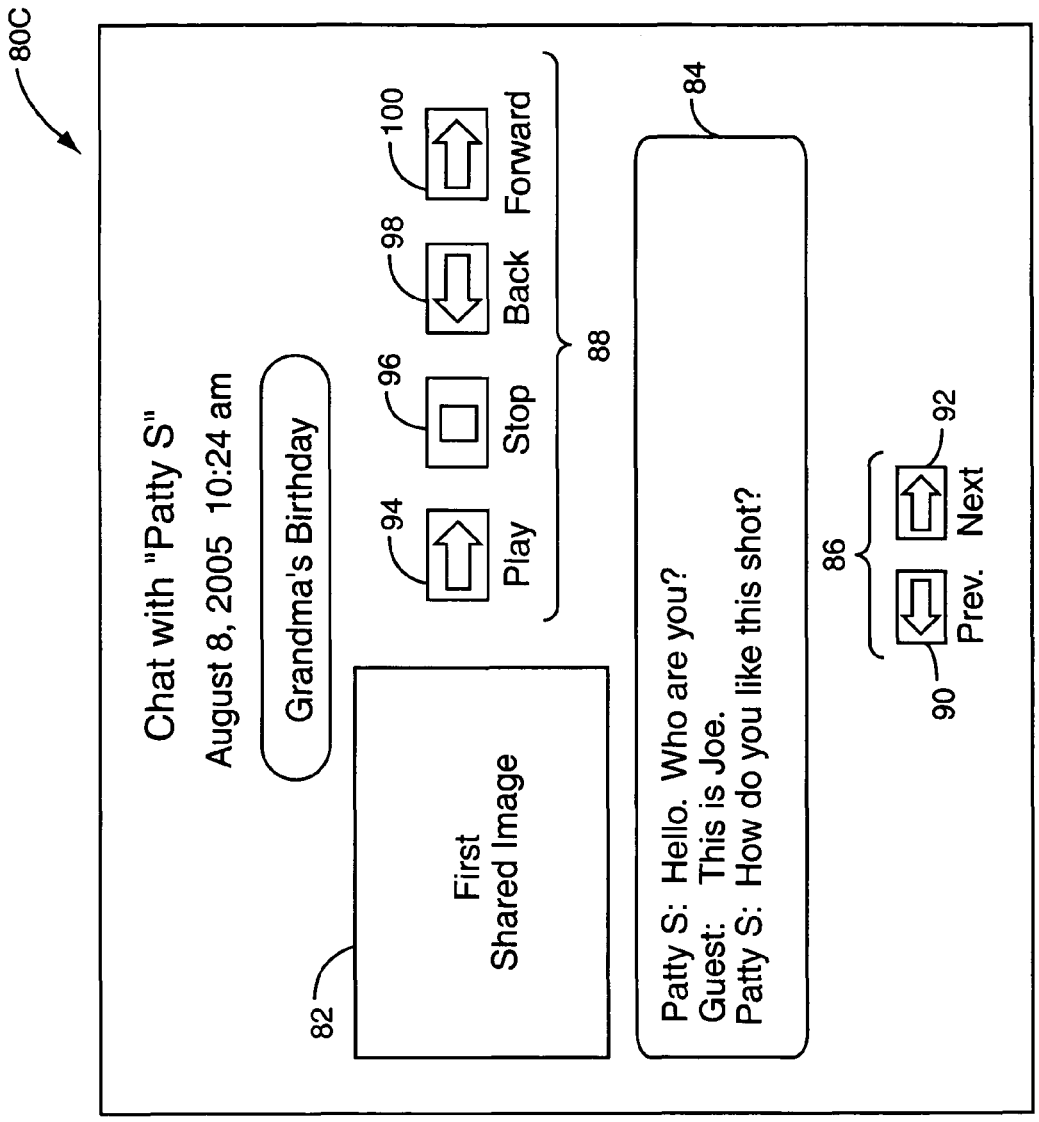
80C
Chat with "Patty S"
August 8, 2005 10:24 am
Grandma's Birthday
First
Shared Image
82
94
Play
96
Stop
98
Back
100
Forward
88
84
Patty S: Hello. Who are you?
Guest: This is Joe.
Patty S: How do you like this shot?
86
90
Prev.
92
Next

FIG. 6C

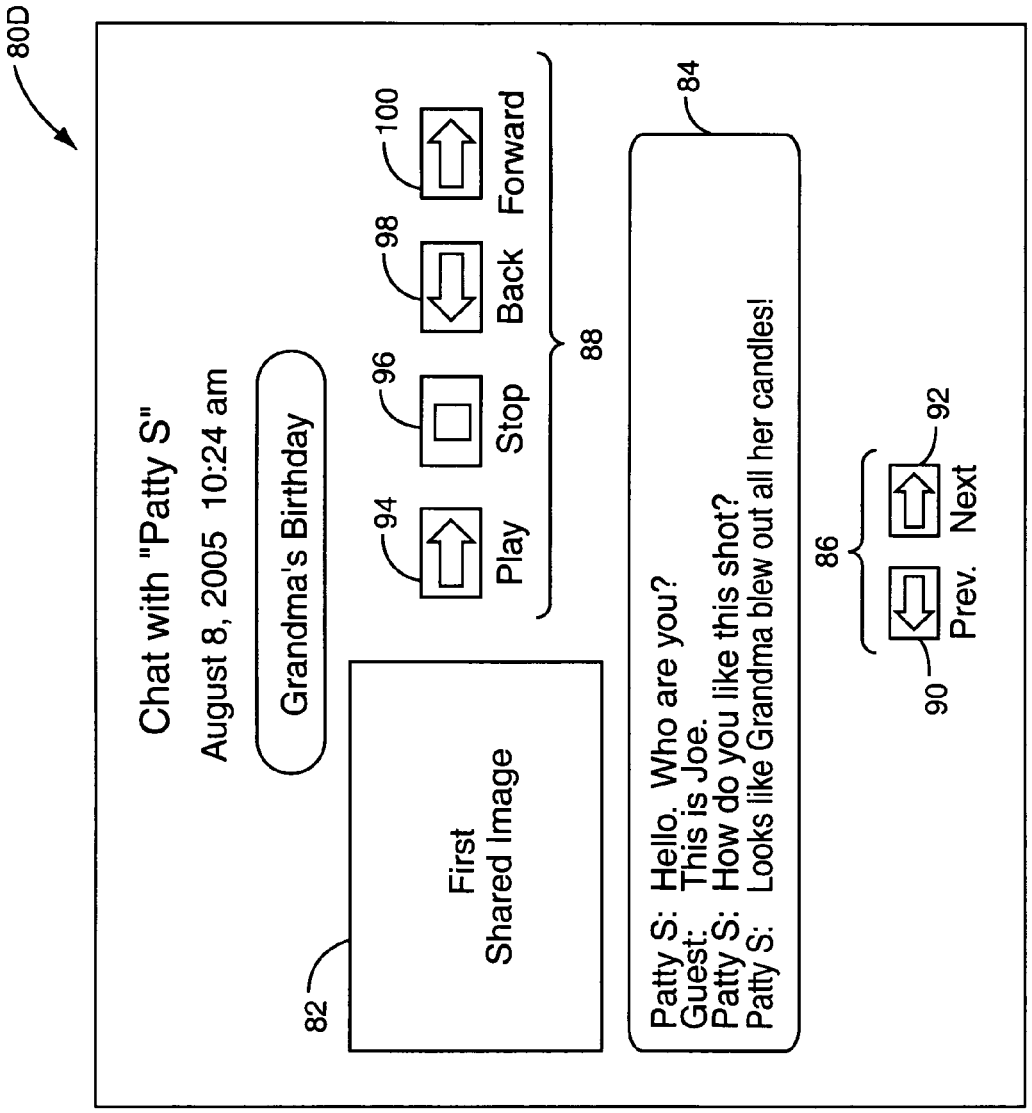
80D
Chat with "Patty S"
August 8, 2005 10:24 am
Grandma's Birthday
82
First
Shared Image
94
96
98
100
Play
Stop
Back
Forward
88
84
Patty S: Hello. Who are you?
Guest: This is Joe.
Patty S: How do you like this shot?
Patty S: Looks like Grandma blew out all her candles!
86
90
92
Prev.
Next

FIG. 6D

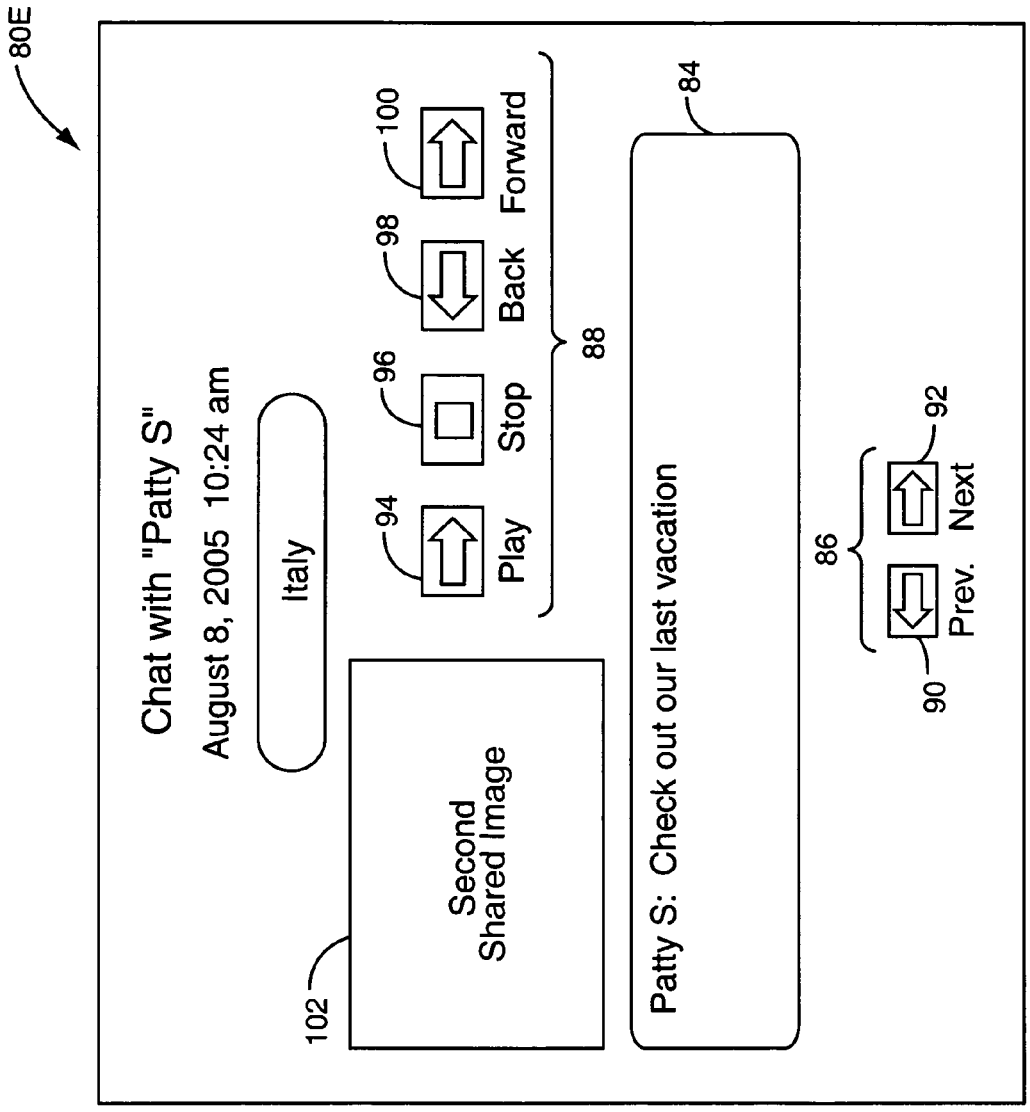
80E
Chat with "Patty S"
August 8, 2005 10:24 am
Italy
Second Shared Image
102
94
Play
96
Stop
98
Back
100
Forward
88
84
Patty S: Check out our last vacation
86
90
Prev.
92
Next

FIG. 6E

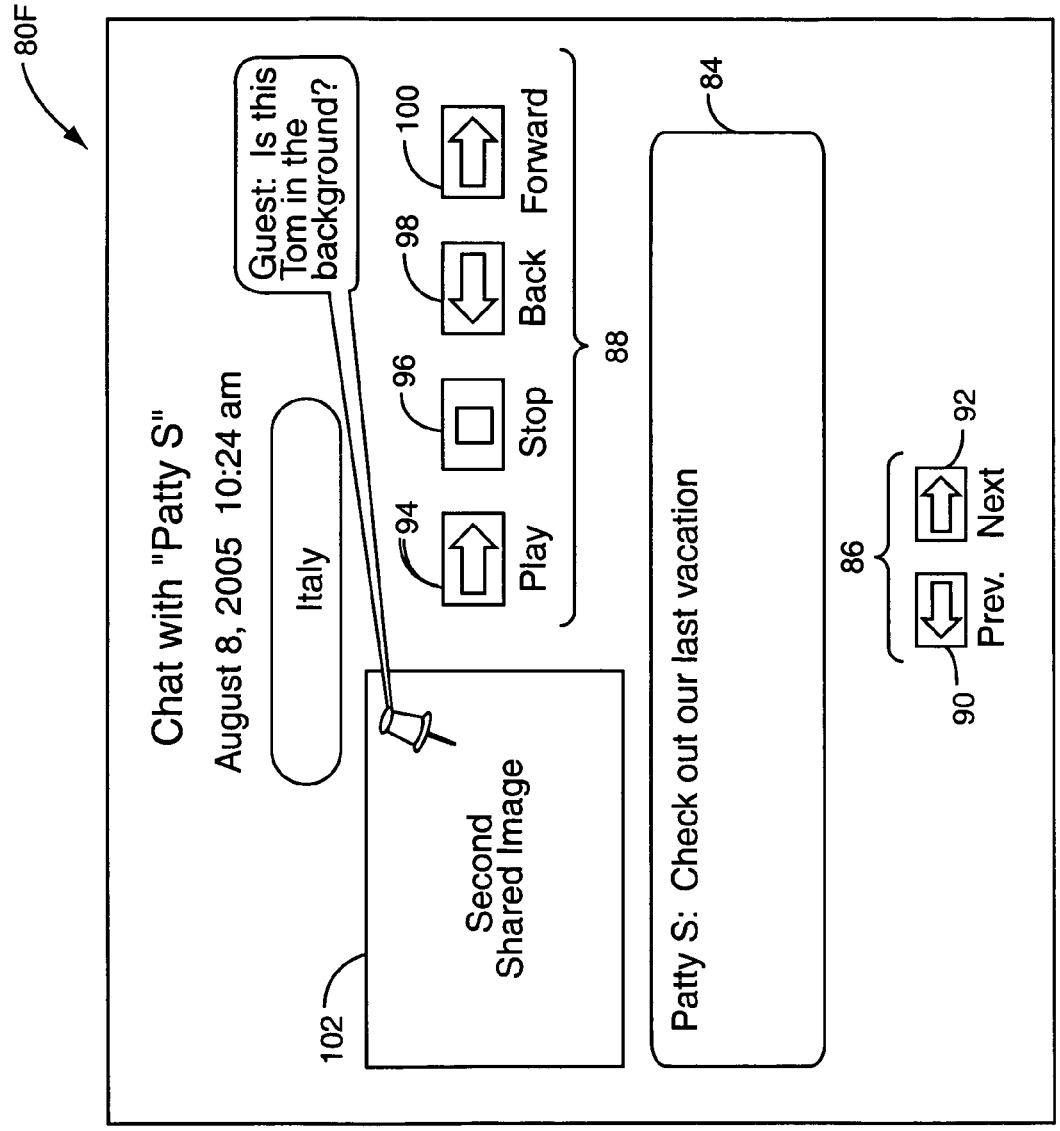
80F
Chat with "Patty S"
August 8, 2005 10:24 am
Italy
Guest: Is this Tom in the background?
Second Shared Image
102
94
Play
96
Stop
98
Back
100
Forward
88
84
Patty S: Check out our last vacation
86
90
Prev.
92
Next

FIG. 6F

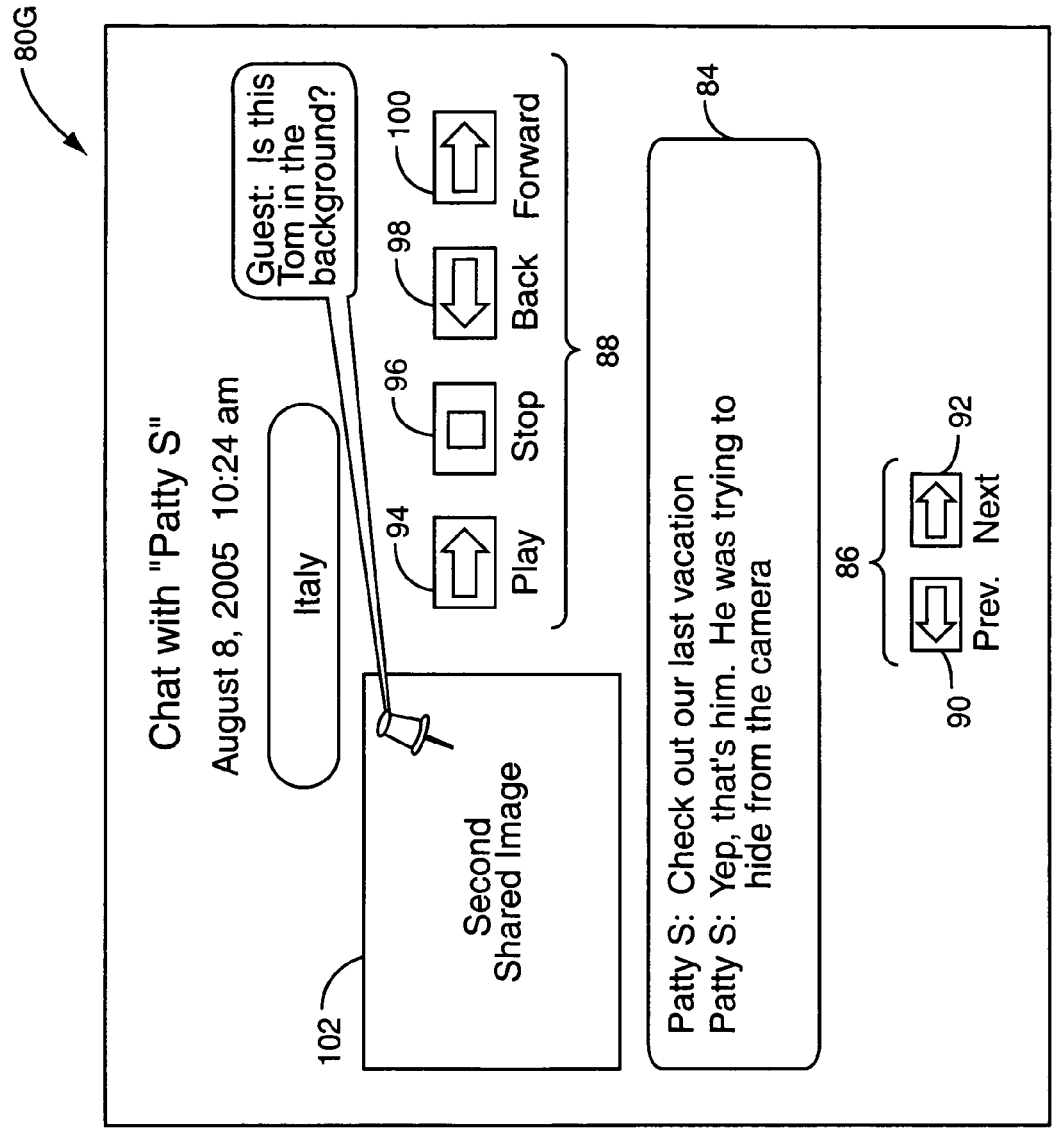
80G
Chat with "Patty S"
August 8, 2005 10:24 am
Italy
Guest: Is this Tom in the background?
Second Shared Image
102
94
Play
96
Stop
98
Back
100
Forward
88
84
Patty S: Check out our last vacation
Patty S: Yep, that's him. He was trying to hide from the camera
86
90
Prev.
92
Next

FIG. 6G

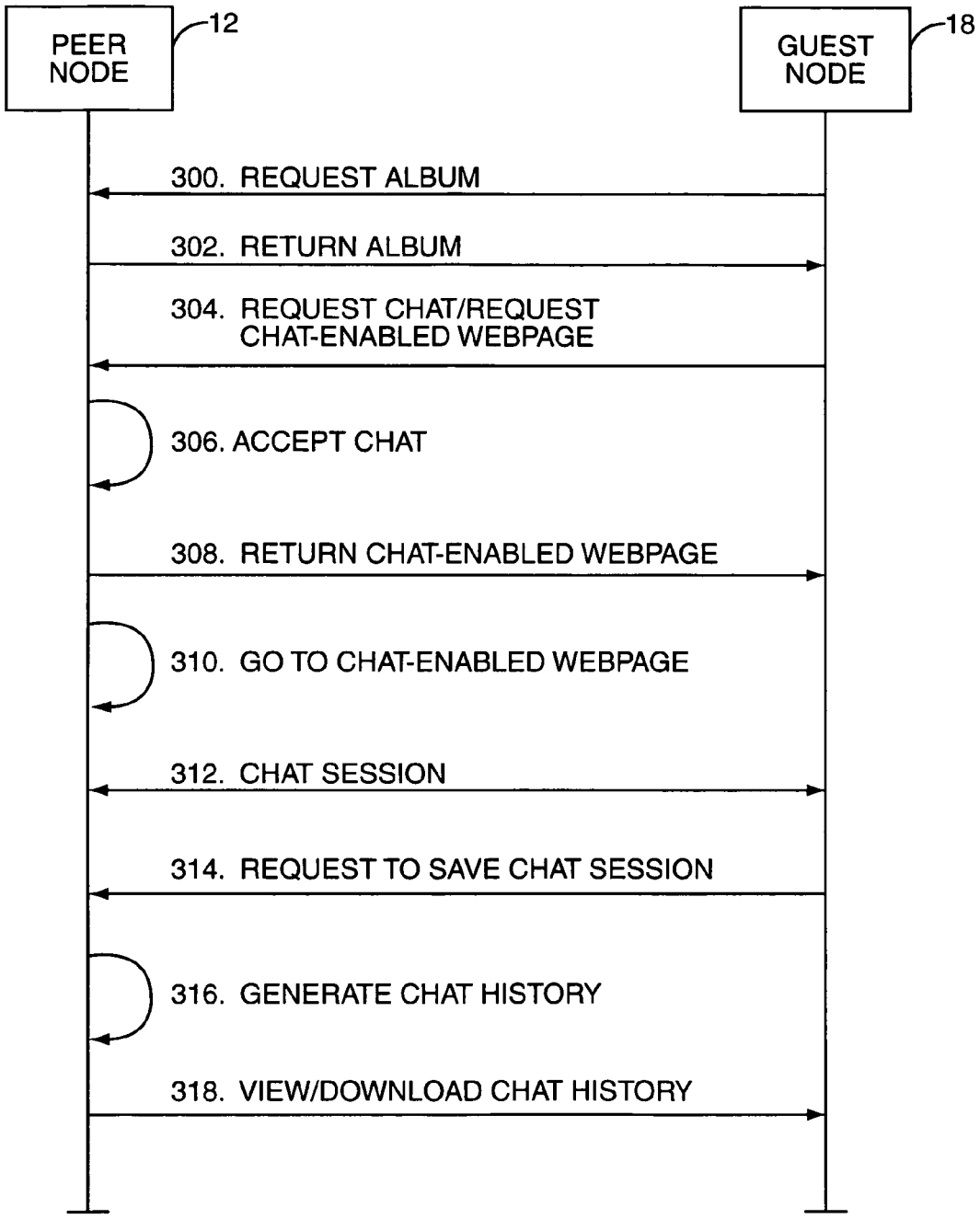
PEER NODE
12
GUEST NODE
18
300. REQUEST ALBUM
302. RETURN ALBUM
304. REQUEST CHAT/REQUEST CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
306. ACCEPT CHAT
308. RETURN CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
310. GO TO CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
312. CHAT SESSION
314. REQUEST TO SAVE CHAT SESSION
316. GENERATE CHAT HISTORY
318. VIEW/DOWNLOAD CHAT HISTORY

FIG. 7

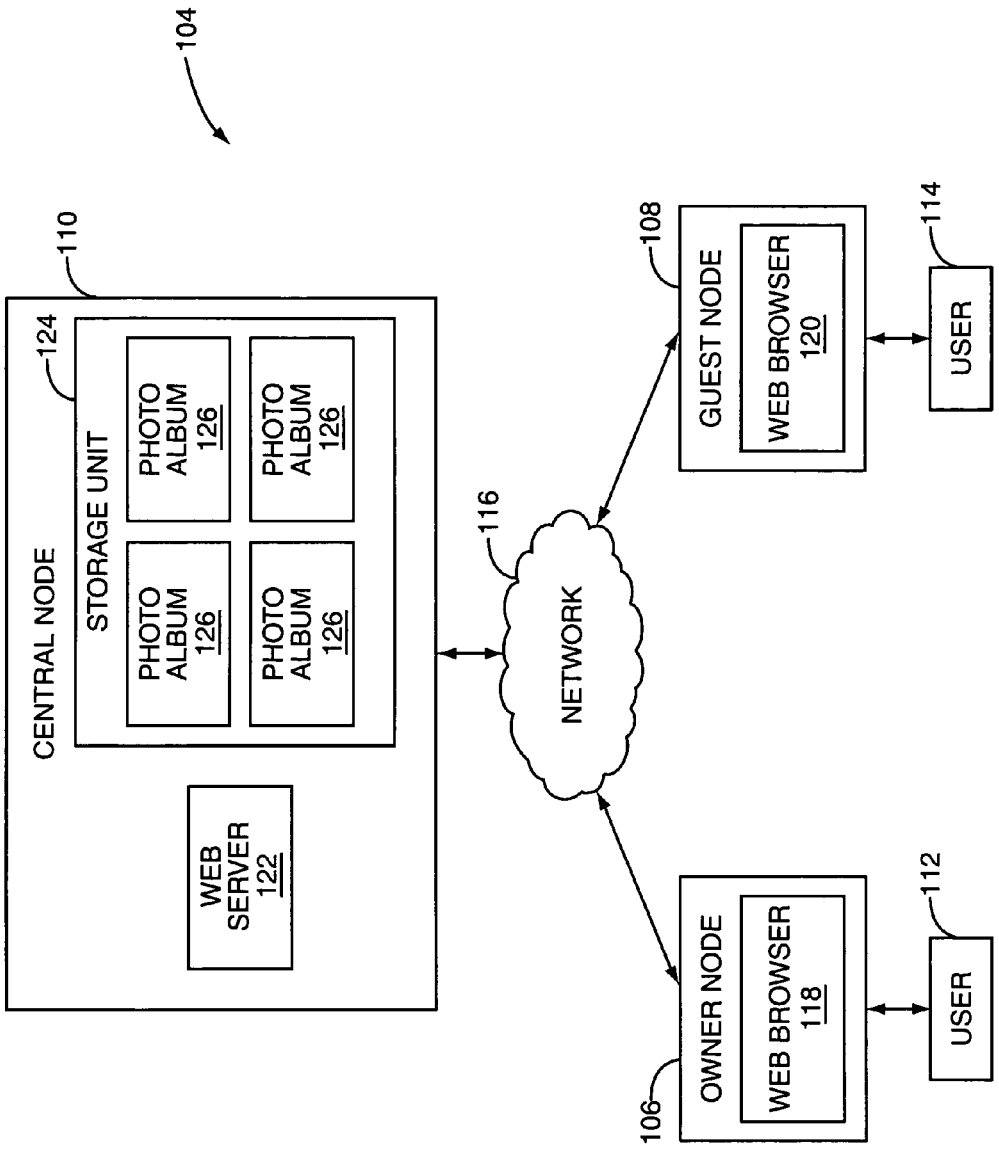
104
110
CENTRAL NODE
124
STORAGE UNIT
PHOTO ALBUM 126
PHOTO ALBUM 126
PHOTO ALBUM 126
PHOTO ALBUM 126
WEB SERVER 122
116
NETWORK
108
GUEST NODE
WEB BROWSER 120
114
USER
106
OWNER NODE
WEB BROWSER 118
112
USER

FIG. 8

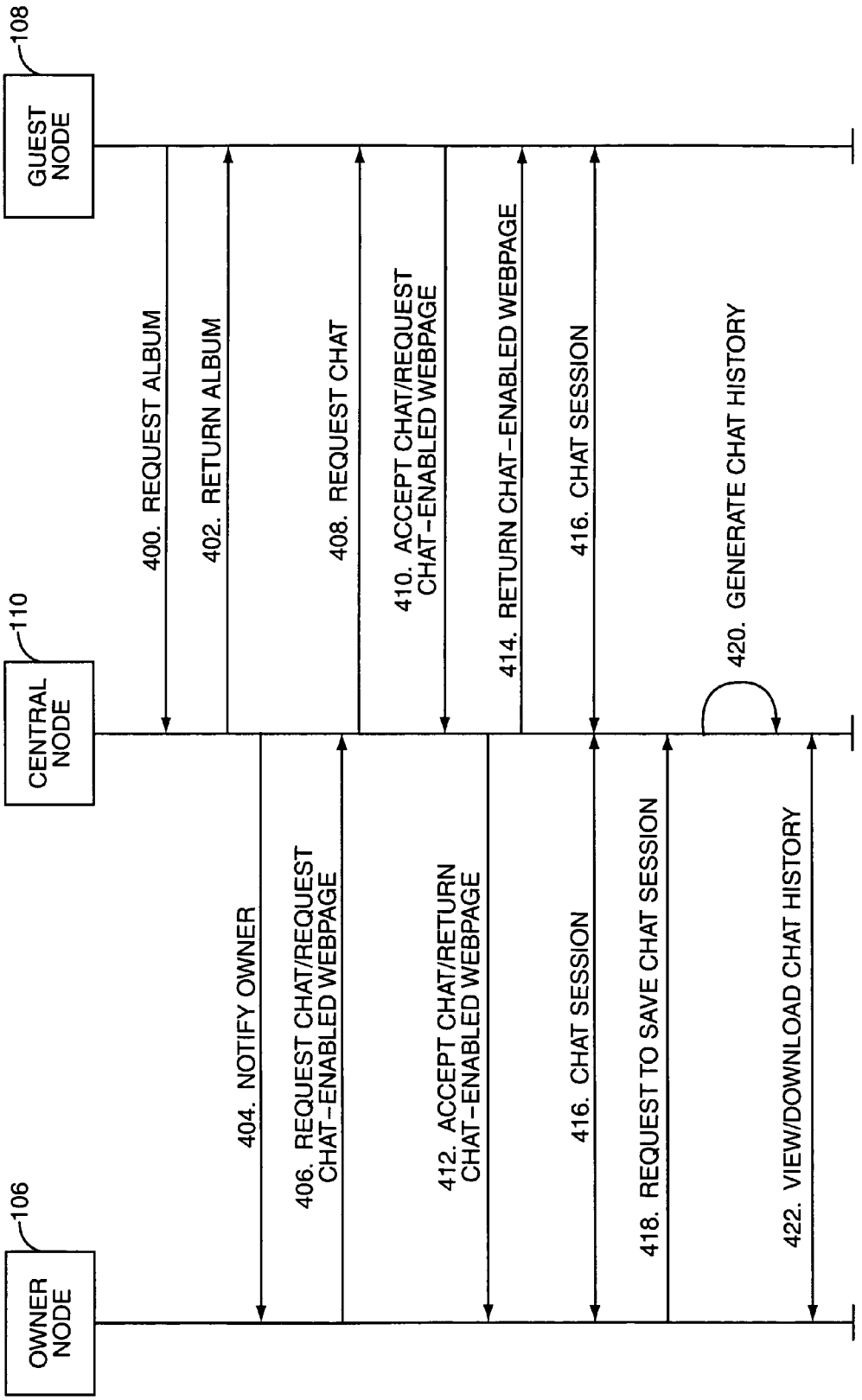
108
GUEST NODE
110
CENTRAL NODE
106
OWNER NODE
400. REQUEST ALBUM
402. RETURN ALBUM
404. NOTIFY OWNER
406. REQUEST CHAT/REQUEST CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
408. REQUEST CHAT
410. ACCEPT CHAT/REQUEST CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
412. ACCEPT CHAT/RETURN CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
414. RETURN CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
416. CHAT SESSION
416. CHAT SESSION
418. REQUEST TO SAVE CHAT SESSION
420. GENERATE CHAT HISTORY
422. VIEW/DOWNLOAD CHAT HISTORY

FIG. 9

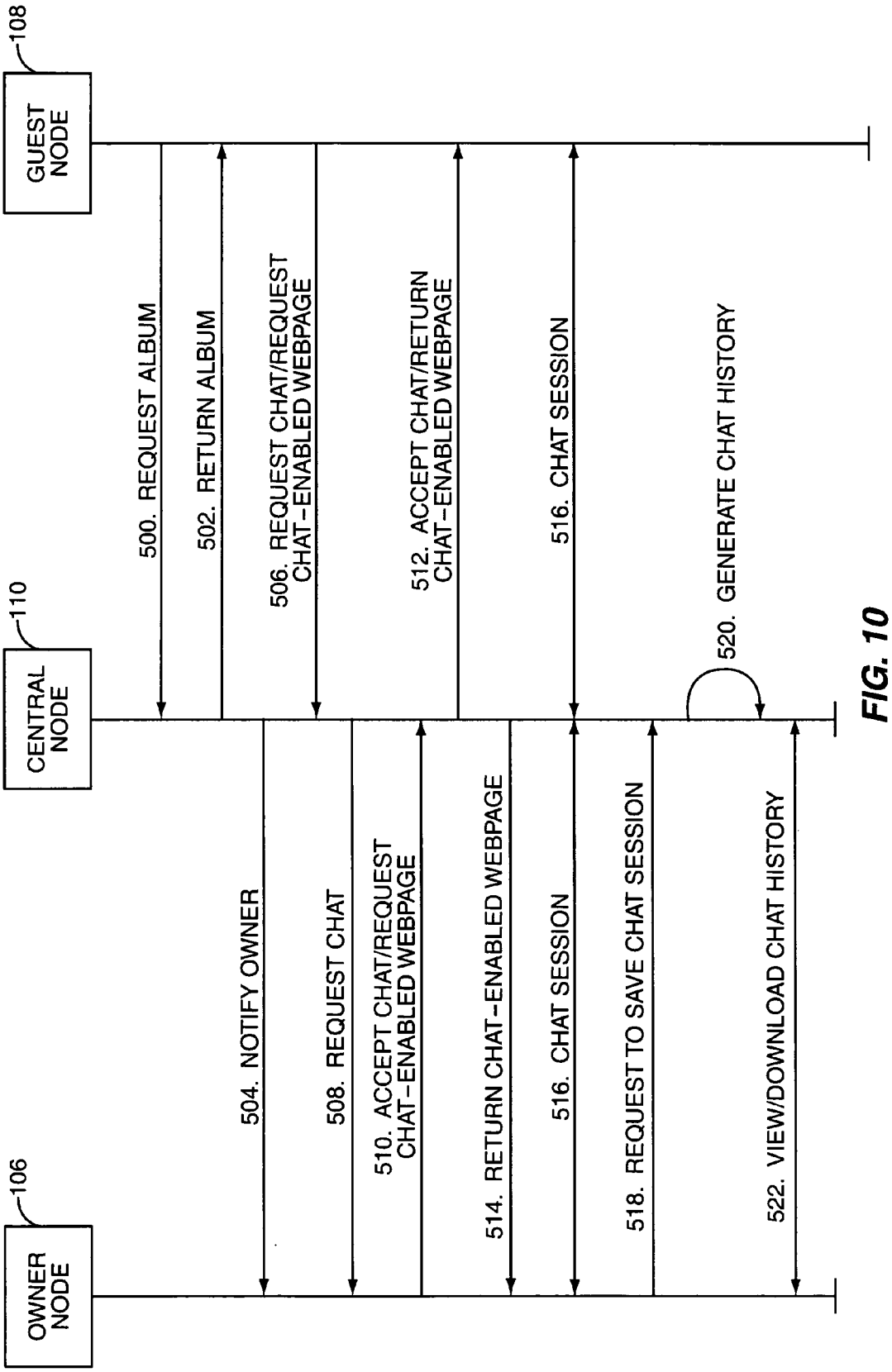
GUEST NODE
108
CENTRAL NODE
110
OWNER NODE
106
500. REQUEST ALBUM
502. RETURN ALBUM
506. REQUEST CHAT/REQUEST CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
512. ACCEPT CHAT/RETURN CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
516. CHAT SESSION
520. GENERATE CHAT HISTORY
504. NOTIFY OWNER
508. REQUEST CHAT
510. ACCEPT CHAT/REQUEST CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
514. RETURN CHAT-ENABLED WEBPAGE
516. CHAT SESSION
518. REQUEST TO SAVE CHAT SESSION
522. VIEW/DOWNLOAD CHAT HISTORY

FIG. 10

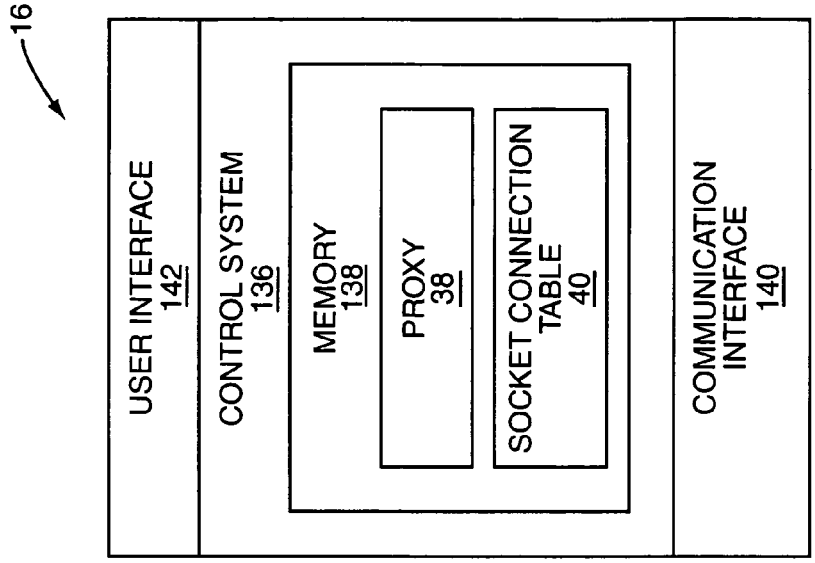
16
USER INTERFACE 142
CONTROL SYSTEM 136
MEMORY 138
PROXY 38
SOCKET CONNECTION TABLE 40
COMMUNICATION INTERFACE 140

FIG. 12

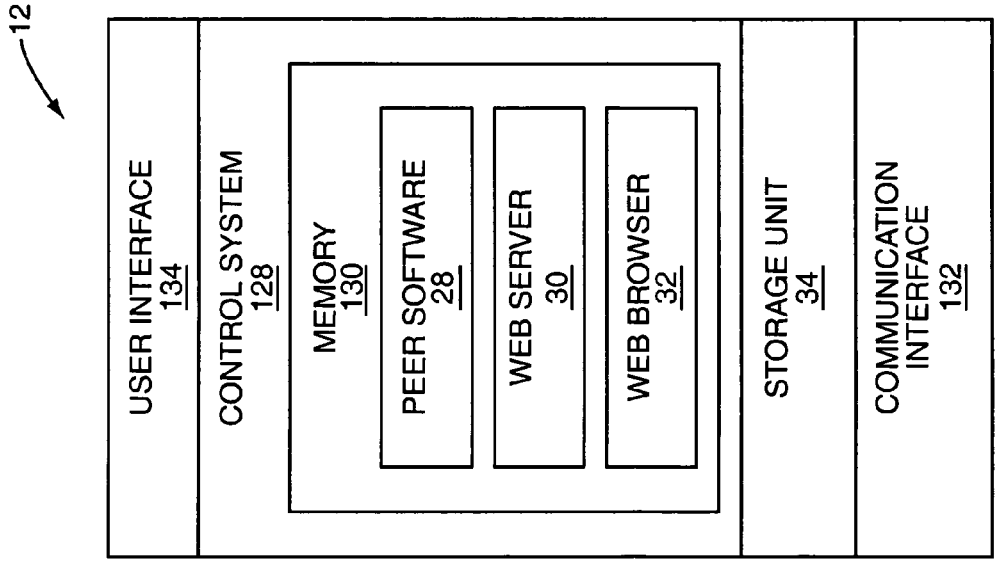
12
USER INTERFACE 134
CONTROL SYSTEM 128
MEMORY 130
PEER SOFTWARE 28
WEB SERVER 30
WEB BROWSER 32
STORAGE UNIT 34
COMMUNICATION INTERFACE 132

FIG. 11

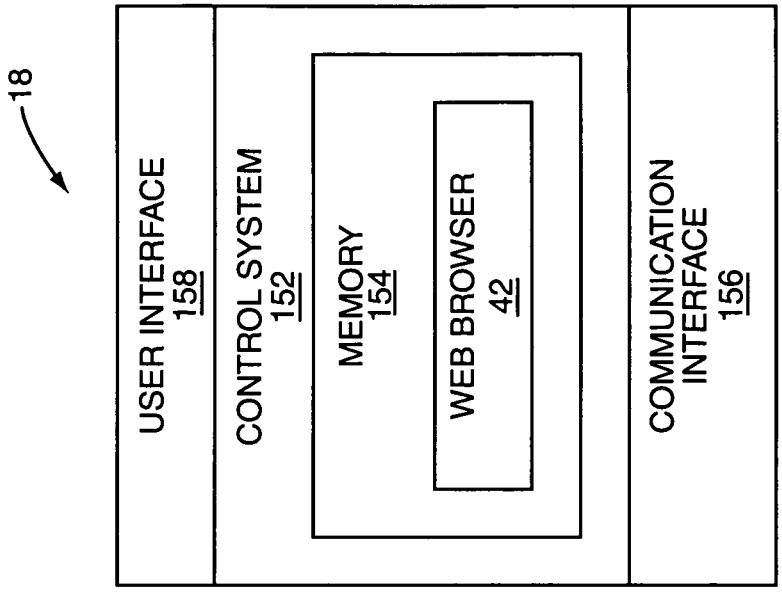
18
USER INTERFACE
158
CONTROL SYSTEM
152
MEMORY
154
WEB BROWSER
42
COMMUNICATION
INTERFACE
156

FIG. 14

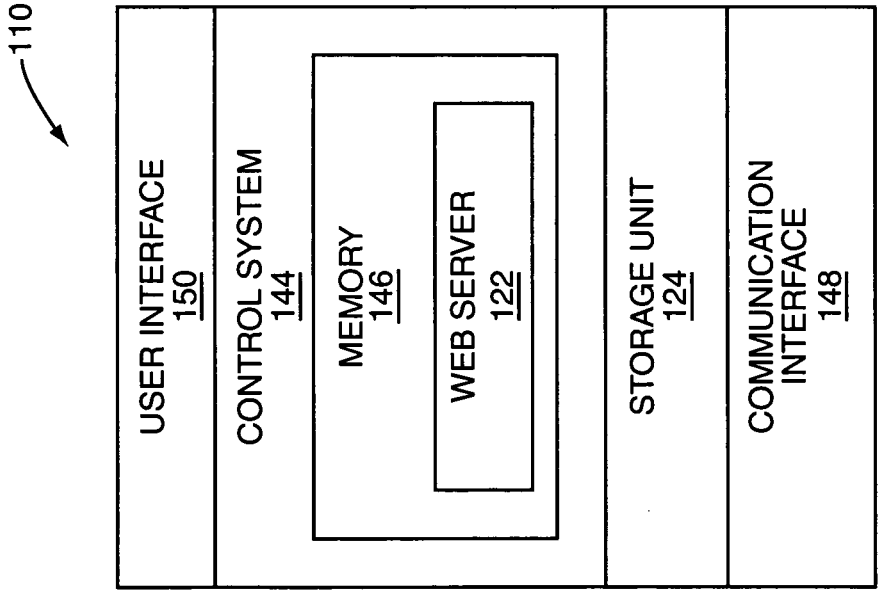
110
USER INTERFACE
150
CONTROL SYSTEM
144
MEMORY
146
WEB SERVER
122
STORAGE UNIT
124
COMMUNICATION
INTERFACE
148

FIG. 13

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR RECORDING A PHOTO CHAT SESSION

RELATED U.S. PATENT APPLICATION

This U.S. patent application is related to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/274,684, filed on Nov. 15, 2005, and entitled CHATTING WITH GUESTS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY VIEWING PHOTOS IN AN ONLINE PHOTO ALBUM, which is hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to online photo albums and more particularly relates to recording a chat session between an owner of an online photo album and a guest viewing the online photo album.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Photosharing has been part of our society since the advent of personal cameras. After taking photographs, film is developed and the resultant printed pictures are organized into a photo album or simply stored in some fashion. Thereafter, the owner of the pictures may share the pictures with a guest. In doing so, the owner and the guest are typically sitting side-by-side such that the owner and the guest can comment on each picture. For example, the owner and guest may exchange comments on the people in the picture, where the picture was taken, the day that the picture was taken, and the like. In this manner, the owner and the guest easily converse while viewing the pictures.

With the proliferation of digital cameras, a number of online photosharing systems have emerged in order to enable efficient and convenient sharing of digital images using online photo albums. Two architectures for online photosharing systems are a peer-to-peer (P2P) architecture or a centrally hosted architecture. In a P2P system, online photo albums are created and maintained on a peer node and served to guests from the peer node upon request. In a centrally hosted system, the photo albums are hosted on a central server and served from the central server to the guests upon request. These systems typically allow a guest to comment on a picture by entering the comment into a form. Thereafter, the owner of the picture may view the comment. However, these online photosharing systems do not allow the owner and guest to converse while an online photo album is being viewed by the guest. Thus, there remains a need for an online photosharing system that enables a photo chat session to be established between an owner of an online photo album and a guest viewing the online photo album.

Still further, since the participants in a chat session may desire to save the chat session, there remains a need for a system and method for recording a photo chat session between an owner of an online photo album and a guest viewing the online photo album.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a system and method for recording a photo chat session. In one embodiment, an online photo album is hosted by a peer node in a peer-to-peer (P2P) photosharing system, and a photo chat session is established between an owner at the peer node and a guest viewing the online photo album at a guest node. During the photo chat session, the owner and guest view images from the online photo album while chatting about the images. At the end of the photo chat session, either the owner or the guest requests that the photo chat session be saved. In response, the peer node generates a chat history including a slideshow for each shared image recreating a portion of the photo chat session related to the shared image. The chat history is generated using information defining the photo chat session stored at the peer node during the photo chat session. If the photo chat session is text-based, the information defining the photo chat session may include text chat messages exchanged between the owner and the guest for each shared image. If the photo chat session is voice-based, the information defining the photo chat session may include an audio recording of the conversation and information associating each image shared during the photo chat session with a corresponding portion of the conversation.

In another embodiment, an online photo album is hosted by a central node in a centrally hosted photosharing system, and a photo chat session is established between an owner associated with an owner node and a guest viewing the online photo album at a guest node. At the end of the photo chat session, either the owner or the guest requests that the photo chat session be saved. In response, the central node generates a chat history including a slideshow for each shared image recreating a portion of the photo chat session related to the shared image. The chat history is generated using information defining the photo chat session stored at the central node during the photo chat session.

Those skilled in the art will appreciate the scope of the present invention and realize additional aspects thereof after reading the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments in association with the accompanying drawing figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

The accompanying drawing figures incorporated in and forming a part of this specification illustrate several aspects of the invention, and together with the description serve to explain the principles of the invention.

FIG. **1** illustrates an exemplary hybrid peer-to-peer (P2P) photosharing system according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **2** illustrates an exemplary process for establishing a photo chat session between an owner of an online photo album and a guest viewing the online photo album at the request of the owner according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **3** illustrates an exemplary photo album webpage according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **4** illustrates an exemplary guest list provided to the owner of online photo albums according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. **5**A-**5**G illustrate an exemplary chat-enabled webpage during an exemplary photo chat session according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. **6**A-**6**G illustrate an exemplary chat history according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **7** illustrates an exemplary process for establishing a photo chat session between an owner of an online photo album and a guest viewing the online photo album at the request of the guest according to another embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **8** illustrates an exemplary centrally hosted photosharing system according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **9** illustrates an exemplary process for establishing a photo chat session between an owner of an online photo album and a guest viewing the online photo album in the centrally hosted photosharing system at the request of the owner according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **10** illustrates an exemplary process for establishing a photo chat session between an owner of an online photo album and a guest viewing the online photo album in the centrally hosted photosharing system at the request of the guest according to another embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **11** is a block diagram of the peer nodes of FIG. **1** according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **12** is a block diagram of the central node of FIG. **1** according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **13** is a block diagram of the central node of FIG. **8** according to one embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. **14** is a block diagram of the guest node of FIG. **1** and the owner and guest nodes of FIG. **8** according to one embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The embodiments set forth below represent the necessary information to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention and illustrate the best mode of practicing the invention. Upon reading the following description in light of the accompanying drawing figures, those skilled in the art will understand the concepts of the invention and will recognize applications of these concepts not particularly addressed herein. It should be understood that these concepts and applications fall within the scope of the disclosure and the accompanying claims.

The present invention relates to a system and method for recording a photo chat session. In one embodiment, an online photo album is hosted by a peer node in a peer-to-peer (P2P) photosharing system, and a photo chat session is established between an owner at the peer node and a guest viewing the online photo album at a guest node. During the photo chat session, the owner and guest view images from the online photo album while chatting about the images. At the end of the photo chat session, either the owner or the guest requests that the photo chat session be saved. In response, the peer node generates a chat history including a slideshow for each shared image recreating a portion of the photo chat session related to the shared image. The chat history is generated using information defining the photo chat session stored at the peer node during the photo chat session. If the photo chat session is text-based, the information defining the photo chat session may include text chat messages exchanged between the owner and the guest for each shared image. If the photo chat session is voice-based, the information defining the photo chat session may include an audio recording of the conversation and information associating each image shared during the photo chat session with a corresponding portion of the conversation.

FIG. **1** illustrates an exemplary hybrid peer-to-peer (P2P) system **10** for sharing online photo albums according to one embodiment of the present invention. The hybrid P2P system **10** includes peer nodes **12** and **14**, a central node **16**, a guest node **18**, users **20-24**, and network **26**. Preferably, the network **26** is the Internet. There may be any number of peer nodes **12** and **14** and guest nodes **18**. Details of the hybrid P2P system **10** can be found in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/813,839, entitled METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING WEB BROWSING THROUGH A FIREWALL IN A PEER TO PEER NETWORK, filed on Mar. 31, 2004, currently pending, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

In general, the peer nodes **12** and **14** are personal computers, mobile terminals, Personal Digital Assistants, or the like having access to the network **26**. As illustrated, the peer node **12** includes peer software **28**, a web server **30**, optionally a web browser **32**, and a storage unit **34**. It should be noted that the discussion herein of the peer node **12** is equally applicable to the peer node **14**. The web server **30** may be implemented in hardware and/or software. The storage unit **34** may be memory such as Random Access Memory (RAM) or some other storage device such as a hard disc drive. The storage unit **34** operates to store a number of photo albums **36** each comprising a number of digital images. The central node **16** includes a proxy **38** and a socket connection table **40**. The guest node **18** is also a personal computer, mobile terminal, Personal Digital Assistant, or the like having access to the network **26**. Preferably, the guest node **18** includes a web browser **42**.

In operation, when the peer node **12** comes online by either connecting to the network **26** or by enabling the peer software **28**, the peer node **12** establishes a socket connection with the central node **16** and more specifically with the proxy **38**. The central node **16** stores information identifying the socket connection and associating the socket connection with the peer node **12** in the socket connection table **40**. The user **20** at the peer node **12** may then invite the user **24** at the guest node **18** to view one or more of the photo albums **36** by, for example, sending an email invitation including a unique web link to the photo albums **36** at the peer node **12**. The user **20** may also be referred to as an owner of the photo albums **36**, and the user **24** may also be referred to as a guest. When the user **24** at the guest node **18** desires to view one of the photo albums **36** residing at the peer node **12**, the web browser **42** generates a Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) request and provides the HTTP request to the proxy **38** over the network **26**. It should be noted that the HTTP request is exemplary and that the request from the guest node **18** may be implemented in any protocol desired for communication between the central node **16** and the guest node **18**.

The proxy **38** translates the HTTP request into a request message including one or more request packets. In one embodiment, the request message may be a proprietary request message. Using the socket connection table **40**, the proxy **38** identifies the socket connection that connects the peer node **12** to the proxy **38**. The proxy **38** then sends the request message to the peer node **12** via the socket connection.

In response to receiving the request message from the proxy **38**, the peer node **12**, and particularly the peer software **28**, converts the request message into an HTTP request and provides the HTTP request to the web server **30**. In response to the HTTP request, the web server **30** generates an HTTP response including a webpage including the requested photo album **36**. For example, the webpage may include thumbnail images of the digital images in the requested photo album **36**. The peer software **28** converts the HTTP response into a response message including one or more response packets and sends the response message to the proxy **38** via the socket connection. The proxy **38** then converts the response message from the peer node **12** into an HTTP response and sends the HTTP response to the web browser **42** at the guest node **18**. Upon receiving the HTTP response, the web browser **42** displays the webpage corresponding to the requested photo album **36** to the user **24** at the guest node **18**.

FIG. **2** illustrates the process of establishing a photo chat session according to one embodiment of the present invention. As described above, the guest node **18** requests one of the photo albums **36** from the peer node **12** (step **200**); and, in response, the peer node **12** provides the requested one of the photo albums **36** to the guest node **18** as a photo album webpage (step **202**). An exemplary photo album webpage **43** including the digital images from the photo album **36** requested by the guest node **18** is illustrated in FIG. **3**. In this example, the requested one of the photo albums **36** is entitled "Grandma's Birthday." As shown, the photo album webpage **43** may include thumbnail images **44** corresponding to the digital images in the photo album **36**. Preferably, the photo album webpage **43** also includes web links **46** to the other photo albums **36** at the peer node **12** and a "Start Photo Chat" button **48**. As discussed below, the "Start Photo Chat" button **48** may enable the user **24** at the guest node **18** to either accept a chat request from the user **20** at the peer node **12** or to request a chat with the user **20** at the peer node **12**.

Returning to FIG. **2**, the peer node **12**, and more specifically the peer software **28**, then notifies the user **20** that the user **24** at the guest node **18** is currently viewing the photo album **36** (step **204**). In the preferred embodiment, the peer software **28** notifies the user **20** by providing a list of guests **50**, as illustrated in FIG. **4**. As will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art, the list of guests **50** may be generated based on the Internet Protocol (IP) or like address of the guest node **18** embedded within requests from the web browser **42**. If the user **24** at the guest node **18** goes through a log-in process, the IP address of the guest node **18** may be associated with a nickname or username, wherein the nickname or username is displayed in the list of guests **50**.

The list of guests **50** is displayed to the user **20** at the peer node **12** and informs the user **20** of the guests viewing each of the photo albums **36**. In one embodiment, the list of guests **50** is displayed by the web browser **32**. In this example, a first guest and "MaryJo" are currently viewing the homepage of the peer node **12**, a second guest is viewing the "Barns" photo album, and "Dad" and "Julie" are viewing the "Grandma's Birthday" photo album. As these guests view different photo albums **36** or new guests begin to view one of the photo albums **36**, the list of guests **50** is updated by the peer software **28**. The peer software **28** may continuously maintain the list of guests **50** and display the list of guests **50** to the user **20** upon request. Alternatively, the peer software **28** may only generate the list of guests **50** upon request by the user **20**. In addition, if the user **20** is not viewing the list of guests **50**, the peer software **28** may be configured to notify the user **20** when a new guest has started viewing one of the photo albums **36** by, for example, providing a "pop-up" message or email notification. In response to such notification, the user **20** may then request that the list of guests **50** be displayed at the peer node **12**.

Returning again to FIG. **2**, if the user **20** desires to chat with one of the guests currently viewing one of the photo albums **36**, the user **20** requests a chat by, for example, activating a "Start Photo Chat" button **52** associated with the guest in the list of guests **50** (step **206**). In this example, the user **20** activates the "Start Photo Chat" button **52** associated with the user **24** at the guest node **18**. The request may be implemented as a request for a chat-enabled webpage and provided to the web server **30** at the peer node **12**. In response, the web server **30** provides a request to the guest node **18** via the peer software **28** and the proxy **38**. In one embodiment, the request is provided to the guest node **18** as a pop-up window including a web link to the chat-enabled webpage. In another embodiment, the request is provided to the guest node **18** by causing the "Start Photo Chat" button **48** (FIG. **3**) to either appear in the photo album webpage **43** currently viewed by the user **24** at the guest node **18** or by causing the "Start Photo Chat" button **48** to start blinking, change colors, or the like.

The user **24** at the guest node **18** then accepts the chat request, and the guest node **18** sends a request for the chat-enabled webpage to the peer node **12** via the proxy **38** (step **208**). In one embodiment, the user **24** at the guest node **18** accepts the chat request by clicking on the "Start Photo Chat" button **48** in the photo album webpage **43** (FIG. **3**) being viewed. When the user clicks on the "Start Photo Chat" button **48**, the web browser **42** at the guest node **18** generates the request for the chat-enabled webpage. The web browser **42** may generate the request for the chat-enabled webpage using a web link embedded in the photo album webpage **43** in association with the "Start Photo Chat" button **48**.

Upon receiving the request for the chat-enabled webpage from the guest node **18**, the peer node **12** returns the chat-enabled webpage to the guest node **18** (step **210**). In one embodiment, the peer software **28** receives the request for the chat-enabled webpage and translates the request into an HTTP request for the chat-enabled webpage. Based on the HTTP request, the web server **30** provides the chat-enabled webpage. The chat-enabled webpage is then provided to the guest node **18** via the peer software **28** and the proxy **38**. The web server **30** also directs the web browser **32** at the peer node **12** to the chat-enabled webpage (step **212**). At this point, the photo chat session is established, and the user **20** at the peer node **12** and the user **24** at the guest node **18** chat with one another while simultaneously viewing images from one or more of the photo albums **36** (step **214**). Although the discussion herein focuses on a text-based photo chat session, the present invention is equally applicable to a voice-based photo chat session.

An exemplary chat-enabled webpage **54** is illustrated in FIGS. **5**A-**5**G. As illustrated in FIG. **5**A, the chat-enabled webpage **54** may include a shared image **56** corresponding to one of the digital images in the photo album **36**, a "previous" button **58**, a "next" button **60**, an "album home" button **62**, a "follow" button **64**, a "don't follow" button **66**, an "add comment" button **68**, a chat-enabled area **70**, links to the other photo albums **72**, and an "end chat" button **74**. As an example, the shared image **56** may initially be the first image of the photo album **36** being viewed by the user **24** at the guest node **18** when the photo chat session was initiated. Alternatively, the chat-enabled webpage **54** may initially be similar to the photo album webpage **43** of FIG. **3** and include the thumbnail images **44** and the chat-enabled area **70**. Upon selecting one of the thumbnail images **44**, the chat-enabled webpage **54** may then be updated to be as shown in FIG. **5**A.

The "previous" button **58** and the "next" button **60** allow the users **20** and **24** to browse the photo album **36** by changing the shared image **56** to either the previous or next image in the photo album **36**. The "album home" button **62** may enable the users **20** and **24** replace the shared image **56** and the buttons **58**-**62** with thumbnails of all or at least a portion of the images in the photo album **36** similar to the photo album webpage **43** of FIG. **3**.

The "follow" button **64** may be enabled by either the user **20** at the peer node **12** or the user **24** at the guest node **18**. If the user **20** enables the "follow" button **64**, the user **20** effectively "follows" the user **24** as the user **24** browses through the photo albums **36**. More specifically, as the user **24** browses through the photo albums **36**, the chat-enabled webpage **54** viewed by the user **20** at the peer node **12** is updated such that the user **20** views the same images as the user **24** at the guest node **18**. Likewise, if the user **24** enables the "follow" button **64**, the

user **24** "follows" the user **20** as the user **20** browses through the photo albums **36**. The "don't follow" button **66** is optional and may be used by either the user **20** or the user **24** to deactivate the "follow" feature.

As discussed below in more detail, the "add comment" button **68** may be used by either the user **20** or the user **24** to add an indictor, such as a thumbtack or flag, to a particular location on the shared image **56** and a comment associated with the indicator. The chat-enabled area **70** enables text chatting between the users **20** and **24**. Again, while this example focuses on a text-based photo chat session, the present invention is equally applicable to a voice-based photo chat session.

FIGS. **5**A-**5**G illustrate the operation of the chat-enabled webpage **54** during an exemplary photo chat session. In FIG. **5**A, the user **20**, which has the nickname "Patty S," starts the chat by entering the text message "Hello. Who are you?" in the chat-enabled area **70** of the chat-enabled webpage **54** viewed at the peer node **12**. In response, the web browser **42** at the guest node **18** communicates the entered text to the web server **30**, and the web server **30** operates to update the chat-enabled webpage **54** viewed at the guest node **18** to include the text message entered at the peer node **12**. In the preferred embodiment, the web server **30** operates to communicate only the portion of the chat-enabled webpage **54** that has changed to the guest node **18**. Thus, the web server **30** may communicate only the text entered by the user **20** to the web browser **42** at the guest node **18** via the peer software **28** and the proxy **38**.

As illustrated in FIG. **5**B, the user **24** responds by entering the text "This is Joe." in the chat-enabled area **70** at the guest node **18**. The web browser **42** at the guest node **18** communicates with the peer node **12** via the proxy **38** such that the web browser **32** at the peer node **12** is updated to include the entered text message. Then, as shown in FIG. **5**C, the user **20** may enter the text message "How do you like this shot?" Again, the web browser **32** communicates this text message to the web server **30**, and the web server **30** communicates the text message to the web browser **42** at the guest node **18** via the peer software **28** and the proxy **38**. As shown in FIG. **5**D, the user **24** at the guest node may then respond: "Looks like Grandma blew out all her candles!"

The user **20** may then activate the link **72** for the photo album **36** entitled "Italy" as shown in FIG. **5**E. Assuming that the user **24** has chosen to "follow" the user **20**, the web server **30** may operate to update the chat-enabled webpage **54** for both the user **20** and the user **24** to include a second shared image **75**. The second shared image **75** may be the first image in the photo album **36** entitled "Italy." Then, the chat continues when the user **20** enters the text message: "Check out our last vacation."

FIG. **5**F illustrates a commenting feature of the chat-enabled webpage **54**. The user **24** may activate the "add comment" button **68**. By doing so, the chat-enabled webpage **54** enables the user **24** to place an indicator **76** on a particular point of interest in the second shared image **75** and to optionally add a comment **78** associated with the indicator **76**. In this example, the comment **78** asks: "Is this Tom in the background?" Once the indicator **76** and comment **78** are added, the chat-enabled webpage **54** viewed by the user **20** at the peer node **12** is updated by the web server **30** to also include the indicator **76** and the comment **78**. Thereafter, as illustrated in FIG. **5**G, the user **20** may respond: "Yep, that's him. He was trying to hide from the camera."

Returning to FIG. **2**, when either the user **20** or the user **24** desires to end the photo chat session, the photo chat session may be ended by, for example, activating the "End Photo Chat" button **74** in the chat-enabled webpage **54** (FIGS. **5**A-**5**G). At this point, either the user **20** or the user **24** may also request that the photo chat session be saved. For example, once the photo chat session is ended, the text within the "End Photo Chat" button **74** may be changed to "Save Photo Chat." If the user **24** then activates the button **74**, the web browser **42** at the guest node **18** generates a request to save the photo chat session and sends the request to the peer node **12** via the proxy **38** (step **216**). In response, the peer node **12**, and specifically the peer software **28**, generates a chat history (step **218**). Thereafter, since in this example the user **24** requested that the photo chat session be saved, the chat history may be viewed by the user **24** at the guest node **18** or downloaded to the guest node **18** (step **220**).

The chat history is generated based on information stored at the peer node **12** during the photo chat session. For example, during the photo chat session, a series of entries may be stored in a database, where the entries may include identifiers of images viewed during the photo chat session, the text from the photo chat session, information identifying the indicators **76**, and the comments **78** associated with the indicators **76**. The entries are stored sequentially as the corresponding event occurs in the photo chat session. Alternatively, if the photo chat session is a voice-based photo chat session, the conversation between the users **20** and **24** may be recorded as an audio file. Delimiters may be placed within the audio file associating each of the images shared, or viewed, during the photo chat session with the corresponding portion of the conversation. Alternatively, a table may be maintained that associates the images shared during the photo chat session with the corresponding portions of the conversation. Whether the photo chat session is text-based or voice-based, the peer software **28** uses the information recorded during the photo chat session to generate the chat history. The chat history may be generated as an executable file or a series of interactive webpages. The chat history may be stored at the peer node **12** such that either the user **20** or the user **24** may view of chat history. Alternatively, the chat history may be downloaded to the guest node **18**. After download to the guest node **18**, the peer node **12** may or may not retain a copy of the chat history for viewing by the user **20** or subsequent re-transmission to the guest node **18**.

According to one embodiment of the present invention, the chat history is generated as a slideshow having a main slideshow showing the images shared during the photo chat session and a secondary slideshow for each image recreating the portion of the photo chat session for that image. An exemplary chat history is shown in FIGS. **6**A-**6**G. The exemplary chat history corresponds to the photo chat session described above with respect to FIGS. **5**A-**5**G. Again, while this example focuses on a text-based photo chat session, the present invention is equally applicable to a voice-based photo chat session. As shown in FIG. **6**A, a first slide **80**A of the chat history includes a first shared image **82** and chat area **84** including the first text chat message entered by the user **20**. The first slide **80**A also includes main controls **86** and secondary controls **88**. The main controls **86** may include a "previous" button **90** and a "next" button **92**, which enable the viewer to manually step through the main slideshow by going to the previous shared image or the next shared image. The secondary controls **88** may include a "play" button **94**, a "stop" button **96**, a "back" button **98**, and a "forward" button **100**. The "play" button **94** may enable the viewer to play the secondary slideshow illustrating the chat history for the first shared image **82**. The "stop button" **96** may be used to stop the secondary slideshow when it is playing. The "back" and "forward"

buttons **98** and **100** may be used to manually step through the secondary slideshow illustrating the chat history for the first shared image **82**.

If the viewer activates the "next" button **92** in the main controls **86**, the chat history would jump to the next shared image as shown in FIG. **6**E. However, in this example, the viewer either chooses to manually step through or play the secondary slideshow for the first shared image **82**. Thus, as illustrated in FIG. **6**B, a second slide **80**B in the chat history includes the text chat message from the user **24** in response to the message from the user **20** in the first slide **80**A. Note that, in the preferred embodiment, each text message is displayed line by line rather than letter by letter. As shown in FIGS. **6**C and **6**D, the third and fourth slides **80**C and **80**D continue to re-play the photo chat session between the user **20** and the user **24** for the first shared image **82**.

At the end of the secondary slideshow for the first shared image **82**, the main slideshow proceeds to a second shared image **102**, as illustrated in FIG. **6**E. Again, assume that the viewer has chosen to either manually step through or play the secondary slide show for the second shared image **102**. The slides **80**F and **80**G shown in FIGS. **6**F and **6**G then re-play the portion of the photo chat session for the second shared image **102**. Note that if the viewer has chosen to play the chat history, the chat history may automatically start playing the secondary slideshow for the second shared image after the end of the secondary slideshow for the first shared image.

FIGS. **6**A-**6**G illustrate an exemplary embodiment of the chat history. In an alternative embodiment, rather than starting the chat history at the first shared image **82** as shown in FIG. **6**A, the chat history may begin by showing a thumbnail of each image shared during the photo chat session. The viewer may then select a desired one of the shared images and either step through or play the slideshow for the portion of the photo chat session pertaining to the selected image.

FIG. **7** illustrates the process of establishing a photo chat session according to another embodiment of the present invention. This embodiment is similar to that shown in FIG. **2**. However, the photo chat session is initiated by the user **24** at the guest node **18** rather than the user **20** at the peer node **12**. As described above, the guest node **18** requests one of the photo albums **36** from the peer node **12** (step **300**); and, in response, the peer node **12** provides the requested one of the photo albums **36** to the guest node **18** as a photo album webpage (step **302**). The peer node **12**, and more specifically the peer software **28**, may optionally notify the user **20** that the user **24** at the guest node **18** is currently viewing the photo album **36**. This may be beneficial in an embodiment where either the user **24** or user **20** may initiate the photo chat session. However, in this embodiment, such notification is not needed.

While viewing the photo album **36**, the user **24** at the guest node **18** may desire to chat with the owner of the photo album **36**, which is the user **20** at the peer node **12**. As such, the user **24** may request a chat with the user **20** by, for example, activating the "Start Photo Chat" button **48** in the photo album webpage **43** (FIG. **3**). In response, the web browser **42** at the guest node **18** sends a request for a chat-enabled webpage to the peer node **12** via the proxy **38** (step **304**). In response, the peer node **12** may provide the request to chat to the user **20** at the peer node **12** as a pop-up window including a web link to a chat-enabled webpage. Referring to FIG. **4**, in another embodiment, the request may be provided to the user **20** at the peer node **18** by causing a "Start Photo Chat" button **52** corresponding to the user **24** in the list of guests **50** to start blinking, change colors, or the like. It should also be noted that, in one embodiment, the user **24** at the guest node **18** may be provided with an indication as to whether the user **20** at the peer node **12** is currently online to assist the user **24** in deciding whether to request the chat.

The user **20** at the peer node **12** then interacts with the peer node **12** to accept the chat request by, for example, activating the "Start Photo Chat" button **52** in the list of guests **50** (step **306**). Once the chat has been accepted, the web server **30** provides the chat-enabled webpage to the web browser **42** at the guest node **18** (step **308**). In addition, the web browser **32** at the peer node **12** is directed to the chat-enabled webpage (step **310**). At this point, the photo chat session is established, and the user **20** at the peer node **12** and the user **24** at the guest node **18** chat with one another while simultaneously viewing images from one or more of the photo albums **36** (step **312**).

When either the user **20** or the user **24** desires to end the photo chat session, the photo chat session may be ended by, for example, activating the "End Photo Chat" button **74** in the chat-enabled webpage **54** (FIGS. **5**A-**5**G). At this point, either the user **20** or the user **24** may also request that the photo chat session be saved. For example, once the photo chat session is ended, the text within the "End Photo Chat" button **74** may be changed to "Save Photo Chat." If the user **24** then activates the button **74**, the web browser **42** at the guest node **18** generates a request to save the photo chat session and sends the request to the peer node **12** via the proxy **38** (step **314**). In response, the peer node **12**, and specifically the peer software **28**, generates a chat history, as described above (step **316**). Thereafter, since the request to save the photo chat session was made by the user **24** at the guest node **18**, the chat history may be viewed or downloaded by the user **24** at the guest node **18** (step **318**). However, the chat history may be stored at the peer node **12** such that either the user **20** or the user **24** may view the chat history. Alternatively, after download to the guest node **18**, the peer node **12** may or may not retain a copy of the chat history for viewing by the user **20** or subsequent re-transmission to the guest node **18**.

FIG. **8** illustrates an alternative embodiment wherein the present invention is implemented in a centrally hosted photosharing system **104** rather than the hybrid P2P system **10** of FIG. **1**. The system **104** includes an owner node **106**, a guest node **108**, a central node **110**, users **112** and **114**, and a network **116**. Preferably, the network **116** is the Internet. There may be any number of owner nodes **106** and guest nodes **108**.

In general, the owner and guest nodes **106** and **108** are personal computers, mobile terminals, Personal Digital Assistants, or the like having access to the network **116**. As illustrated, the owner node **106** includes a web browser **118**, and the guest node **108** includes a web browser **120**. The user **112** may be referred to herein as an owner, and the user **114** may be referred to herein as a guest.

The central node **110** includes a web server **122** and a storage unit **124**. The web server **122** may be implemented in hardware and/or software. The storage unit **124** may be memory such as Random Access Memory (RAM) or some other storage device such as a hard disc drive. The storage unit **124** operates to store a number of photo albums **126** associated with the user **112** at the owner node **106**. Each of the photo albums **126** includes a number of digital images. The storage unit **124** may also store photo albums for owners in addition to the user **112** at the owner node **106**.

In operation, the user **112** may interact with the central node **110** through the web browser **118** to upload the photo albums **126** and to invite the user **114** to view the photo albums **126**. The user **114** may be invited by sending an email invitation including a web link to the photo albums **126** at the central node **110**. When the user **114** desires to view the photo

albums **126**, the user **114** may activate the web link to the photo albums **126** or enter the associated Uniform Resource Locator (URL) in the web browser **120**. Before viewing the photo albums **126**, the user **114** may be required to log-in using a username and/or password. The username and/or password may be supplied in the email invitation.

According to the present invention, either the user **112** or the user **114** may initiate a photo chat session while the user **114** is viewing the photo albums. More specifically, FIG. **9** illustrates the process of establishing the photo chat session at the request of the user **112** and optionally saving the photo chat session. As illustrated, the process begins when the web browser **120** at the guest node **108** requests one of the photo albums **126** from the central node **110** (step **400**), and the central node **110** returns the requested photo album **126** in the form of a photo album webpage such as that shown in FIG. **3** (step **402**).

The central node **110** sends a notification to the owner node **106** that the user **114** at the guest node **108** is currently viewing the requested photo album (step **404**). In one embodiment, the user **112** views a list of guests such as that shown in FIG. **4** using the web browser **118**. More specifically, when the user **112** desires to view the list of guests, the user **112** may access the central node **110** via the web browser **118**. Accessing the central node **110** may include entering a known URL of the central node **110** and logging-in using a username and password associated with the user **112**. The user **112** may then interact with the web browser **118** to request the list of guests currently viewing each of the photo albums **126** from the central node **110**. In response, the central node **110** provides a webpage including the list of guests currently viewing each of the photo albums **126** associated with the user **112** to the web browser **118** at the owner node **106**. The central node **110** may generate the list of guests in response to receiving the request. Alternatively, the central node **110** may continuously maintain the list of guests and provide the list of guests from memory upon receiving the request. Thereafter, the central node **110** operates to update the list of guests and provide the updated list of guests to the owner node **106** as the guests browse through the photo albums **126**.

If the user **112** desires to chat with the user **114** currently viewing one of the photo albums **126**, the user **112** interacts with the web browser **118** such that the web browser **118** sends a request to chat to the central node **110** (step **406**). The request to chat may include a request for a chat-enabled webpage and identify the user **114** at the guest node **118** or the guest node **118**. In one embodiment, the request to chat may include activating a "Start Photo Chat" button associated with the user **114** in the list of guests viewed by the user **112** at the owner node **106**. In response, the web browser **118** may generate the request for the chat-enabled webpage using an embedded web link associated with the "Start Photo Chat" button.

Upon receiving the request from the owner node **106**, the central node **110** sends a request to chat to the guest node **108** (step **408**). The central node **110** may send the request by, for example, sending a pop-up to the web browser **120** at the guest node **108** or causing a "Start Chat" button to appear or begin blinking in the photo album webpage currently being viewed by the user **114**. The user **114** then accepts the chat, and the web browser **120** sends a request for the chat-enabled webpage to the central node **110** (step **410**). The user **114** may accept the chat by clicking on a web link within a pop-up or by activating a "Start Chat" button within the photo album webpage.

In response to receiving the acceptance and the request for the chat-enabled webpage from the guest node **108**, the central node **110** provides the chat-enabled webpage to the owner node **106** and the guest node **108** (steps **412** and **414**). At this point, the photo chat session is established and the users **112** and **114** chat while simultaneously viewing images from the photo albums **126**, as described above (step **416**). As an example, when the user **112** enters a text message, the text message is provided to the central node **110**. In response, the central node **110** updates the chat-enabled webpage such that the text message is provided to the web browser **120** at the guest node **108**.

When the photo chat session is complete, either the user **112** or the user **114** may request that the photo chat session be saved. In this example, the user **112** requests that the photo chat session be saved. In response, the owner node **106** sends a request to save the photo chat session to the central node **110** (step **418**). Upon receiving the request, the central node **110** generates a chat history based on information stored during the photo chat session, as described above (step **420**). Thereafter, the chat history may be viewed and/or downloaded by the owner node **106** (step **422**).

FIG. **10** is similar to FIG. **9** and illustrates the embodiment where the photo chat session is initiated by the user **114** at the guest node **108**. As illustrated, the process begins when the web browser **120** at the guest node **108** requests one of the photo albums **126** from the central node **110** (step **500**), and the central node **110** returns the requested photo album **126** in the form of a photo album webpage such as that shown in FIG. **3** (step **502**).

The central node **110** sends a notification to the owner node **106** that the user **114** at the guest node **108** is currently viewing the requested photo album (step **504**). In one embodiment, the user **112** views a list of guests such as that shown in FIG. **4** using the web browser **118**. More specifically, when the user **112** desires to view the list of guests, the user **112** may access the central node **110** via the web browser **118**. Accessing the central node **110** may include entering a known URL of the central node **110** and logging-in using a username and password associated with the user **112**. The user **112** may then interact with the web browser **118** to request the list of guests currently viewing each of the photo albums **126**. In response, the central node **110** provides a webpage including the list of guests currently viewing each of the photo albums **126** associated with the user **112** to the web browser **118** at the owner node **106**. The central node **110** may generate the list of guests in response to receiving the request. Alternatively, the central node **110** may continuously maintain the list of guests and provide the list of guests from memory upon receiving the request. Thereafter, the central node **110** operates to update the list of guests and provide the updated list of guests to the owner node **106** as the guests browse through the photo albums **126**. In another embodiment, the central node **110** may notify the user **112** at the owner node **106** by sending an email notification or a pop-up message.

The user **114** at the guest node **108** may then initiate a photo chat session. More specifically, the user **114** may activate a "Start Photo Chat" button on the photo album webpage. In response, the web browser **120** at the guest node **108** sends a request for a photo chat session to the central node **110** (step **506**). In one embodiment, the request for the photo chat session includes a request for a chat-enabled webpage.

Upon receiving the request from the guest node **108**, the central node **110** sends a request to chat to the owner node **106** (step **508**). The central node **110** may send the request by, for example, sending a pop-up to the web browser **118** at the owner node **106**, causing a "Start Chat" button to appear or begin blinking in a webpage being viewed by the user **112** and showing the list of guests, or by sending an email message to

the user **112**. The user **112** then accepts the chat, and the web browser **118** at the owner node **106** sends a request for the chat-enabled webpage to the central node **110** (step **510**).

In response to receiving the acceptance and the request for the chat-enabled webpage from the owner node **106**, the central node **110** provides the chat-enabled webpage to the guest node **108** and the owner node **106** (steps **512** and **514**). At this point, the photo chat session is established, and the users **112** and **114** chat while simultaneously viewing images from the photo albums **126**, as described above (step **516**). When the photo chat session is complete, either the user **112** or the user **114** may request that the photo chat session be saved. In this example, the user **112** requests that the photo chat session be saved. In response, the owner node **106** sends a request to save the photo chat session to the central node **110** (step **518**). Upon receiving the request, the central node **110** generates a chat history based on information stored during the photo chat session, as described above (step **520**). Thereafter, the chat history may be viewed and/or downloaded by the owner node **106** (step **522**).

FIG. **11** is a block diagram of the peer node **12** of FIG. **1**. The peer node **12** may generally include a control system **128** having associated memory **130**. The memory **130** may store the peer software **28**, the web server **30**, and the web browser **32**. Note that the web server **30** may be implemented in hardware and/or software. The peer node **12** also includes the storage unit **34**. In an alternative embodiment, the storage unit **34** may be included within the memory **130**. The peer node **12** also includes a communication interface **132** for communicating with other network entities via the network **26**. The communication interface **132** also may include an interface to various external devices such as a printer. The peer node **12** also includes a user interface **134**, which may include a keypad, mouse, display, and the like (not shown).

FIG. **12** is a block diagram of the central node **16** of FIG. **1**. The central node **16** may generally include a control system **136** having associated memory **138**. The memory **138** may store the proxy software **38** and the socket connection table **40**. Note that the proxy **38** may be implemented in hardware and/or software. The central node **16** may also include a communication interface **140** for communicating with other network entities via the network **26**. The communication interface **140** may also include an interface to various external devices. The central node **16** may also include a user interface **142**, which may include a keypad, mouse, display, and the like (not shown).

FIG. **13** is a block diagram of the central node **110** of FIG. **8**. The central node **110** may generally include a control system **144** having associated memory **146**. The memory **146** may store the web server **122**. Note that the web server **122** may be implemented in hardware and/or software. The central node **110** also includes the storage unit **124**. In an alternative embodiment, the storage unit **124** may be included within the memory **146**. The central node **110** may also include a communication interface **148** for communicating with other network entities via the network **116**. The communication interface **148** may also include an interface to various external devices. The central node **110** may also include a user interface **150**, which may include a keypad, mouse, display, and the like (not shown).

FIG. **14** is a block diagram of the guest node **18** of FIG. **1**. However, this discussion is equally applicable to the owner and guest nodes **106** and **108** of FIG. **8**. The guest node **18** may generally include a control system **152** having associated memory **154**. The memory **154** may store the web browser **42**. The guest node **18** also includes a communication interface **156** for communicating with other network entities via the network **26**. The communication interface **156** also may include an interface to various external devices such as a printer. The guest node **18** also includes a user interface **158**, which may include a keypad, mouse, display, and the like (not shown).

Those skilled in the art will recognize improvements and modifications to the preferred embodiments of the present invention. All such improvements and modifications are considered within the scope of the concepts disclosed herein and the claims that follow.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of recording a photo chat session including communications between a first user and a second user who are viewing a plurality of images, the method comprising:

recording information defining the photo chat session during the photo chat session;

receiving a request to save the photo chat session; and

generating a chat history comprising a plurality of slideshows, wherein each one of the plurality of slideshows corresponds to a different one of the plurality of images, each of the plurality of slideshows comprising a sequence of slides wherein each slide in the sequence comprises the corresponding one of the plurality of images and a successive portion of the communications that occurred when the corresponding one of the plurality of images was viewed by the first user and the second user.

2. The method of claim **1** wherein recording the information defining the photo chat session comprises, for each of the plurality of images, storing text chat messages exchanged during a portion of the photo chat session associated with the image.

3. The method of claim **1** wherein recording the information defining the photo chat session comprises storing information defining an indicator pointing to a particular location within one of the plurality of images and a comment associated with the indicator added during a portion of the photo chat session associated with the one of the plurality of images.

4. The method of claim **1** wherein recording the information defining the photo chat session comprises recording a voice-based conversation between participants of the photo chat session and, for each of the plurality of images, storing information associating the image with a corresponding portion of the voice-based conversation.

5. The method of claim **1** wherein the chat history further comprises a plurality of user selectable images, wherein each of the plurality of user selectable images corresponds to a different one of the plurality of slideshows and enables selection of the corresponding one of the plurality of slideshows.

6. The method of claim **1** wherein generating the chat history further comprises generating a main slideshow linking the plurality of slideshows.

7. The method of claim **1** wherein generating the chat history comprises generating the chat history as an executable file.

8. The method of claim **1** wherein generating the chat history comprises generating the chat history as a plurality of linked webpages.

9. The method of claim **1** further comprising: establishing the photo chat session between an owner at a peer node hosting an online photo album and a guest viewing the online photo album at a guest node.

10. The method of claim **9** wherein generating the chat history further comprises generating the chat history at the peer node.

11. The method of claim **10** further comprising: providing the chat history from the peer node to the guest node.

12. The method of claim 1 further comprising: establishing the photo chat session between an owner at an owner node associated with an online photo album hosted at a central node in a centrally hosted photosharing system and a guest viewing the online photo album at a guest node.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein generating the chat history further comprises generating the chat history at the central node.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising: providing the chat history from the central node to at least one of the owner node and the guest node.

15. A system comprising:

a) a communication interface coupled to a network for communicating with a guest node;

b) a storage unit adapted to store an online photo album; and

c) a control system adapted to:

i) establish a photo chat session between an owner associated with the online photo album and a guest viewing a plurality of images from the online photo album at the guest node;

ii) record information defining the photo chat session during the photo chat session;

iii) receive a request to save the photo chat session from one of the owner and the guest; and

iv) generate a chat history comprising a plurality of slideshows, wherein each one of the plurality of slideshows corresponds to a different one of the plurality of images, each of the plurality of slideshows comprising a sequence of slides wherein each slide in the sequence comprises the corresponding one of the plurality of images and a successive portion of communications that occurred when the corresponding one of the plurality of images was viewed by the owner and the guest.

16. The system of claim 15 wherein the information defining the photo chat session comprises, for each of the plurality of images, text chat messages exchanged during a portion of the photo chat session associated with the image.

17. The system of claim 15 wherein the information defining the photo chat session comprises information defining an indicator pointing to a particular location within one of the plurality of images and a comment associated with the indicator added during a portion of the photo chat session associated with the one of the plurality of images.

18. The system of claim 15 wherein the information defining the photo chat session comprises a recording of a voice-based conversation between participants of the photo chat session and, for each of the plurality of images, information associating the image with a corresponding portion of the voice-based conversation.

19. The system of claim 15 wherein the corresponding one of the plurality of slideshows includes a plurality of slides recreating a portion of the photo chat session associated with the corresponding one of the plurality of images.

20. The system of claim 15 wherein the chat history further comprises a main slideshow linking the plurality of slideshows.

21. The system of claim 15 wherein the control system is further adapted to generate the chat history as an executable file.

22. The system of claim 15 wherein the control system is further adapted to generate the chat history as a plurality of linked webpages.

23. The system of claim 15 wherein the system is a peer node hosting the online photo album and the control system is further adapted to establish the photo chat session between the owner at the peer node and the guest viewing the online photo album at the guest node.

24. The system of claim 23 wherein the control system is further adapted to provide the chat history to the guest node.

25. The system of claim 15 wherein the system is a central node hosting the online photo album in a centrally hosted photosharing system and the control system is further adapted to establish the photo chat session between the owner at an owner node and the guest viewing the online photo album at the guest node.

26. The system of claim 25 wherein the control system is further adapted to provide the chat history from the central node to at least one of the owner node and the guest node.

27. The method of claim 5 further comprising: receiving an input identifying one of the user selectable images; and presenting the one of the plurality of slideshows corresponding to the one of the user selectable images in response to the input.

28. The system of claim 15 wherein the chat history further comprises a plurality of user selectable images, wherein each of the plurality of user selectable images corresponds to a different one of the plurality of slideshows and enables selection of the corresponding one of the plurality of slideshows.

29. The system of claim 28 wherein the control system is further adapted to receive an input identifying one of the user selectable images, and present the one of the plurality of slideshows corresponding to the one of the user selectable images in response to the input.

30. The method of claim 1, wherein each slide in the sequence of slides for each of the plurality of slideshows further comprises a back control which, upon selection, displays a previous slide in the sequence of slides of the corresponding slideshow, and a forward control which, upon selection, displays a next slide in the sequence of slides of the corresponding slideshow.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein each slide in the sequence of slides for each of the plurality of slideshows further comprises a previous control which, upon selection, enables selection of a previous one of the plurality of slideshows, and a next control which, upon selection, enables selection of a subsequent one of the plurality of slideshows.

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